

**Signing Ceremony for the Agreement between the Cyprus Institute and the National and
Kapodistrian University of Athens**
Opening Address by Costas N. Papanicolas, President of the Cyprus Institute

Minister Kozakou - Marouli, Minister of Communication and Works
Dr. Andrea Moleskis, head of the Cyprus EU presidency Secretariat
Your Excellency, Ambassador of Greece
Prof Asimakopoulle, Rector of the Univ. of Athens,
Prof. B. Klein, Vice Chancellor of the Univ. of California -Davis.

Dear Trustees,
Distinguished guests, colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The signing ceremony for the collaboration between the Cyprus Institute and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens marks a most important milestone in the development of our Institute and the fostering of the network of its defining collaborations. It is actually long overdue, not only because of its significance but also because the collaboration among scientists of the two institutions is widespread, dynamic and growing. The Agreement we are about to sign manifests the determination of the leadership of both Institutions to further enhance our strong collaborative effort which is recognized as mutually beneficial, by providing the appropriate formal framework.

The Cyprus Institute is a very young Institution, founded in 2005 and having started its operations in the fall of 2007. We are very proud of what our Institute has accomplished in this short time interval, emerging as one of the dynamic institutions of the region making it possible for us to collaborate with well established and historical institutions. It is indicative of its growing regional and international reach that in this event, today, we have the presence of the Vice Chancellor for Research of the University of California at Davis, and Profs. Murray Moinester and Eli Piasetszky leading an Israel delegation; we are exploring with both parties collaborative agreements with the University of California and Israeli Institutions. It is also indicative the presence in the Audience of so many leading scientists from an impressive array of international institutions.

Cyprus is the only EU country that lies in the Middle East, in the Center of a rich and diverse, problematic and full of opportunities geographical area. Cyprus can act as a gateway between Europe and the Middle East, becoming a regional centre for scientific research and Education. By assuming this role, Cyprus not only will transform its own economy by transforming it in a knowledge economy, it could help advance the entire area, a region which could overcome its problems and conflicts by using science and technology to build a peaceful and prosperous future for its people. The Cyprus Institute is a novel research and educational institution for the entire region and for Europe which will address issues of science and technology of regional relevance and of global significance. It is being developed and supported by the Cyprus Government, which strongly believes in this vision frequently articulated by the President of the Republic D. Christofias who is also the honorary Chair of our Board, to help realize this vision. The presence here of two leading figures of the

Government Minister Markoulli and Dr. Moleskis is yet another verification of this commitment for which we are both appreciative and grateful.

The Institute has launched so far three Research Centres: the Energy, Environment and Water Research Centre (EEWRC), the Science and Technology in Archaeology Research Centre (STARC) and the Computation-based Science and Technology Research Centre (CaSToRC). A fourth Centre, the Biological Sciences and Human Health Research Centre (BSHHRC) is currently being scoped – we hope to launch it in 2011.

We enter into this partnership with a truly remarkable institution: The University of Athens is the oldest university of the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean region, having been established in 1837. It is an institution that has spearheaded educational and research activities in this part of the world for almost two centuries. Today, the University of Athens has an important contribution in the development of new knowledge and is considered as one of the important European Universities. It has over 80.000 undergraduate students, over 10.000 graduate students and employs more than 2000 faculty members. It is the only Greek University ranked among the top 200 Universities of the world.

This is the first agreement signed by our Institute with a Greek University, and its significance cannot be overstated. The University of Athens has a very long and close, a truly defining, relationship with Cyprus and the region. Thousands of Cypriots in every walk of life were educated there; it is indicative that both of our Distinguished dignitaries from the Cyprus Government: Dr. Erato Kozakou Markoulli Minister of Communication and Works, and Dr. Andreas Moleskis head of the Cyprus EU presidency Secretariat are alumni of the University of Athens.

The Agreement marks the beginning of the formal collaboration between the Cyprus Institute and the University of Athens. I emphasise formal since collaborations with a number of researchers from the University of Athens have already started some time now and continue to grow, as for example, the collaboration of Prof. Mathaios Santamouris and his research team in the field of sustainable build environment, Prof. Kallos in climate change research and Prof. Voskos in the digitization of Cypria Letters (Κυπριακή Γραμματεία). From today, these partnerships will exist under a formal framework which will encourage even more close contacts, joint research and educational activities in areas of common interest.

The Institute also benefits from close ties with a number of prominent faculty members of the University of Athens who are contributing in its development. Prof. Costas Stefanis a trustee of our Institute, Prof. Christos Zerefos is a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the EEWRC and Prof. Nota Kourou, who is with us today, a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of STARC.

However, the engagement of the Rector of the University of Athens, and dear friend, Prof. Dimosthenis Asimakopoulos, who graciously but also eagerly agreed to pursue this partnership, exemplifies the close ties of the two institutions. Prof. Asimakopoulos is here with us today as the Rector of the University of Athens but his engagement as an educator and a scientist dates back to the early days of planning the Institute. A distinguished

Physicist and Environmental Scientist, Prof. Asimakopoulos' research interests lie with Physics of Build Environment and Atmospheric Pollution in urban areas, two fields that are also high on the research agenda of our Institute. He has been a founding Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of EEWRC and he has represented the University of Athens at the Inauguration of this very Building. We benefited tremendously from his advice in many stages of the development of the Institute. We are also honoured to have in the delegation of UoA Prof. Panayiotis Kontos, General Secretary of the University of Athens, a scholar with deep interest in the Cypriot cultural life and widely known for his untiring efforts to advance the cultural and scientific ties between Cyprus and Greece.

There is no doubt that this collaboration will flourish into a most fruitful relationship that will contribute in a significant way to the scholarly and educational life in Europe and the region.