



Δήμος Λευκωσίας  
Nicosia Municipality

Γραφείο Δημάρχου  
Mayor's Office

## **NICOSIA'S PLEDGE TO THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS**

**18 September 2020**

European cities together can build a stronger inclusive and more social oriented Europe if they are committed to contributing to a more inclusive society, ensuring equal opportunities and active support to all its citizens especially to the most underprivileged.

Nicosia is the capital of the Republic of Cyprus. Nicosia is a divided city, the last divided capital in Europe. The division line that runs from east to west through the historic centre has turned the centre of the city into an urban frontier. Approximately 70% of the area of Nicosia Municipality lies in the UN controlled buffer zone and in the area of the Cyprus Republic occupied by the Turkish military forces since 1974. Division has created constant threats to the competitiveness, vibrancy and sustainability of the capital city of Cyprus. Its wide ranging adverse impacts have been affecting spatial development, demographic and economic activity trends.

Nicosia in the past few decades underwent rapid population change due to a high concentration of immigrants. Official census statistics reveal that the percentage of Third Country Nationals has risen from 9% to over 15% (Population Census 2001&2011) and that immigrants reaching approximately the 35% of walled city population.

The Cypriot labour market has been affected by the economic crisis of 2013, with unemployment and poverty increasing. Unemployment rate (LFS) increased reaching 10,46% in 2011, 16,3% in 2014 but has shown a constant decline 14,9% in 2015 and dropping to 13,3% in 2016 and to 9,8% in July. The category mostly affected is youth. Particularly worrying is the rapid increase in long-term unemployment.

Cyprus population at risk of poverty in 2017 according to statistical service of Cyprus reached 25.2% and 22,3% in 2019 according to EU statistics on Income and living Conditions (EU-SILC) 2019. In the area of Nicosia this number was 33.04% (in 2013).

Priority for Nicosia Municipality is to sustain the right for equal treatments and opportunities regardless of gender racial or ethnic origin, religion of belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Everyone has the right to equal opportunities regarding employment and social protection services, especially the most vulnerable groups of population. Nicosia Municipality is also committed to provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring every child has access to social services and child support programmes.

The commitment of Nicosia to provide the appropriate measures to achieve successful social integration policies is vital! Unfortunately our efforts to change current state practises of centralized social policy have not been successful. Social policy remains fully centralized and funding extremely limited towards local authorities. There is no sustainability guarantee. As a result the various programmes we are currently undertaking are seriously underfunded in relation to the problems at hand.

Regardless of the difficulties described above we have been, through perseverance and hard work, manage to implement a number of parent- child and youth targeted programmes.

## **Commitment to principle 11 'Childcare and Support to Children'**

Equal opportunities and access to care services and recreational activities especially for the most vulnerable children coming from all ethnic backgrounds has been at the forefront of social policy for Nicosia Municipality. In 2007 Nicosia Municipality embarked on a comprehensive social policy to provide needed Childcare and support programmes for children. It has promoted a range of measures and programmes in the framework of Strategic Development Plans of Nicosia, establishing facilities such as day care, community and job centers to help re-conciliate family and employment responsibilities with an aim to improve the position of women in economic and social life.

The Municipality of Nicosia along with the Nicosia Municipality Multifunctional Foundation, has undertaken a number of actions in the area of social service and childcare provision that are concrete measures to reconcile economic and family life for local and immigrant parents especially the most vulnerable (single parent and large families, lower income families, unemployed parents etc) and to facilitate access to the labour market, through:

- Provision of after school day care centres for children aged 5-12 years old
- Provision of the Home day care services and recreational activities for toddlers and preschoolers aged up to 5 years old. The service is provided through vetted caregivers at their houses ensuring each child's safety and care requirements.
- Provision of Summer School services for children aged 5-12 years old and children with disabilities.
- Provision of specific educational and recreational activities to children coming from third countries for the retention of their parents cultural heritage.
  - Promote social cohesion by providing equal opportunities for underprivileged children
  - Promote the interaction of different groups of population and cultures
  - Cultivate acceptance and understanding, of different traditions and customs

We are committed to expand services to children and working parents by introducing two new centers at the end of 2020:

- **Ouranio Toxo (Rainbow)** co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund of the EU, within the framework of the implementation of the Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Urban Development (Budget, €2.500.000 for infrastructure and services, implementation period: 3 years). Our main target is primarily to increase capacity (60 new places) for the provision of after school services to children and secondly to expand the daily services from 6:00pm to 8:00pm and the weekly services from Monday - Friday to Monday – Saturday. Today we operate 3 day care centres for children 5-12 years old during school period and 5 day care centres during summer period providing services to more than 500 children and their families with an estimated budget of €300.000 euros per year.
- **Solidarity Network Nicosia in Action (NicInAct)** co- financed by the financial mechanism of Norway Grants and the republic of Cyprus (Budget €500.000, implementation period 24 months). The centre will operate as an open community centre for NGOs, migrant organizations, formal and informal groups to meet and promote cultural and business actions. The operation of the center has a two-prong scope:
  - On the one hand, it will become an open space for exchange and shared activities between NGOs with an aim to promote the social dialogue and enhance partnership between NGOs.
  - On the other hand, it will operate as a one-stop-shop for the needy. Services will include: **career advice, counselling services, entrepreneurship support, in- home childcare services, law, family income advices, educational workshops, referrals to other NGOs etc.**

## **Commitment to principle 04 'Active Support to Employment'**

Nicosia has developed an **Integrated and Sustainable Urban Development Strategy for the programming period 2014-2020**, that encompass several measures for attracting enterprises in and around the old town and provide assistance to everyone to improve employment or self-employment prospects.

Nicosia has incorporated plans for developing support structures (hub and incubator among other) for promoting innovation, encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit, supporting start-ups and enhancing the creation of new jobs. These support structures include space and support mechanisms to aid entrepreneurship in the creative industry sector, innovative technologies, green economy, etc. and are available to everyone. The strategy also foresees the development of a community centre for vulnerable groups including immigrant organisations and NGOs to meet and promote employability, cultural and business actions. The city of Nicosia is deeply committed and has heavily invested in many ways. This support amounts to almost 20,000.000 euros and is not only limited to financial contribution but also expands to personnel and infrastructure. The City of Nicosia is supporting entrepreneurs among others through:

- **Centre of Excellence in Research and Innovation RISE (-Research Centre on Interactive media, Smart systems and Emerging technologies).** The key purpose of RISE is to attain excellence in scientific research and inspire disruptive innovation and creativity, by bringing a critical mass of researchers, scientists and entrepreneurs close together with enterprises, local authorities and other stakeholders, ensuring direct and connected impact of research outputs on innovation and ultimately forging an extroverted innovation-driven economy in Cyprus and the region. RISE will establish the business incubator centre that will support among others young entrepreneurs and start-ups.
- **Maker Space and Co-working space.** Beyond providing for an incubator to the Cultural and Creative industry sector as well as enabling the municipality to offer technical and design assistance to entrepreneurs, Maker Space will ensure the delivery of a number of trainings, workshops, presentations conferences and so on to the general public. Within this framework, RISE will avail a number of technologies and tools as well as relevant training to existing and budding entrepreneurs as well as businesses to help prototype and advance their ideas as well as skills.
- **Nicosia's Quarter of Creative Industries (QCI)** with RISE being a Centre focal point for this initiative. The cluster will foster the development of an inclusive innovation and creativity ecosystem at the heart of the city. Nicosia's Quarter of Creative Industries (QCI) will host infrastructures and entrepreneurship initiatives in close spatial proximity to each other, within the historic city center, helping focus and integrate existing fragmented activities and pushing towards creating a cluster of research and innovation working closely together with entrepreneurs including nascent entrepreneurs. The cluster will also make available to its beneficiaries a broad spectrum of professional services such as networking and funding opportunities.
- **Municipality Plan to support businesses adjacent to the Green Line (Buffer Zone).** The plan aims to attract new business in the proposed area, encourage existing businesses to move to the proposed area aiming at the socio-economic upgrading of the areas adjacent to the Green Line and encourage companies already operating in this area to expand their services in order scale up and be more competitive. It does so by the provision of a 75% reimbursement grant for the restoration of eligible premises.

- Nicosia Municipality Foundation introduced the project "Information and Training Center for Enhancing Employment and Entrepreneurship - KEEAED"** (for vulnerable groups). It is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund of the EU, in the framework of the implementation of the Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Urban Development (Budget 1,900,000 for infrastructure and services, implementation period 3 years). The project specifically addresses unemployment through the development of employability and entrepreneurship support. Beneficiaries will have the opportunity to advance their skills, knowledge and expertise in order to become self-confident and improve their entrepreneurship profile and employability. The key to lead an independent life is a steady income which will support them in becoming self-reliant and able to provide for their children and families. On a second level, the support offered will develop their social skills, learn about the Cypriot / EU culture and way of life, and become more integrated in the local communities. The center will operate on 2021.

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PLAQUE OF HONOUR



FLAG OF HONOUR

Η «Πλάκα της Τιμής» και η «Σημαία της Τιμής» απονεμήθηκαν στο Δήμο Λευκωσίας το 2014 από το Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης για την ενεργή προαγωγή του Ευρωπαϊκού ιδεώδους το 2013.

The «Plaque of Honour» and the «Flag of Honour» were granted to Nicosia Municipality in 2014 from the Council of Europe for actively promoting the European ideal in 2013.