

**FINAL CONFERENCE
MODERNISING THE CIVIL PROCEDURE RULES IN CYPRUS
8 DECEMBER 2021, 11 AM.**

Honourable Attorney General of the Republic,

Honourable President and Members of the Supreme Court,

Honourable President of the Judges' Association,

Representative of the Representation of the European Commission in
Cyprus,

(Vice) President of the Cyprus Bar Association,

Honourable Presidents and Judges,

Representatives of the European Commission and the Council of
Europe,

Today's ceremony marks the completion of a significant project of the reform agenda. The review of the Civil Procedure Rules is one of the essential components of the ongoing justice reform and constitutes a significant part of the ambitious plan of the Government for the holistic and profound reform of justice.

The reform aims at building a modern and efficient system for administering justice, having as its primary objective the timely delivery of justice. Amongst other things, it promotes flexibility, simplification of the procedures, and specialization through the establishment of new specialized Courts. Moreover, it focuses on the enhancement of transparency, the introduction of the necessary checks and balances, and the effective management of the current backlog of cases. Clearly, from such an ambitious Reform, the integration of technology and the introduction of modern IT systems and processes could not be absent.

I am pleased for all the envisaged projects that have already been concluded. At the same time, we remain vigilant and determined, focusing our efforts on collectively overcoming the remaining few concerns regarding the bills currently before Parliament, so that we deliver a fast, transparent, accessible and quality Judicial System, for which we will all be proud of.

The reform has been a long and demanding process, full of challenges and obstacles, which we have collectively managed to overcome. Coming close to the end of this process, I am optimistic that the reform will be hopefully concluded the following year.

The new Civil Procedure Rules constitute a milestone towards the modernisation of the justice system and the overall reform. Their adoption and implementation will lead to the equitable distribution of the judicial time and the timely delivery of justice, through strict case management. According to the new Rules, the timelines for the trial of the case will be planned at the outset, while the procedures will become more flexible and efficient. This will address the problem of continuous postponements, which currently unnecessarily prolong the length of the proceedings and create unnecessary costs.

Understandably, this is not the end of the road, but the beginning for the next, also important, steps: the smooth transition to the application on the field of the new Civil Procedure Rules, so that these can be impactful and provide tangible results.

The revision of the Rules, an issue discussed for decades, faced in the past insurmountable hurdles, to the extent that most believed that it could not be achieved. Yet, the conclusion of the Civil Procedures Rules project today illustrates that what once may look elusive or unachievable can be realised through collective efforts, hard work, open-mindedness and commitment on the general goal.

I hope that this excellent achievement will be a beacon of hope for the three bills related to the reform of the highest level of jurisdiction and that are currently discussed in the Parliament.

On behalf of the Government, I would like to express my gratitude towards all the participants and agencies, foreign and local, who have contributed to the conclusion of this technical and difficult project.

I would like to thank the Supreme Court for their dedication and commitment, and especially the Rules Committee for their hard work and their active role and important contributions to the drafting and finalization of the Rules.

Many thanks to the Cyprus Bar Association for its commitment and support, and, also, the Director of Reform and Training for his indispensable contribution to the Project management and implementation.

Finally, I would like to thank the European Council and the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) for funding the project and for their close collaboration, professionalism and continuous support. This is an illustrative example of how the cooperation between the European Institutions and the Member States can lead to the progress, to modernisation and to important Reforms as the current one.

I would like to highlight that the reform efforts have been positively reported in the second Rule of Law Report of the European Commission, adopted in July 2021. An effective judicial system is very important in upholding the rule of law and the fundamental values, as well as for achieving economic development and strengthening the attractiveness for international investments.

Before closing, I would like to take the opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the Government for actively supporting of the implementation of reforms.

From my side, I want to assure you that I am determined and dedicated to implement this reform and I shall do whatever it takes, investing as much time as necessary, to see this Reform being materialised.

Thank you.