

Speech for
Closing event

Project:

ENHANCING THE CURRENT REFORM OF THE COURT SYSTEM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AS WELL AS THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE IN CYPRUS

8 December 2021

Dear President of the Supreme Court,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today at this event dedicated to the completion of a very successful project with the Supreme Court of Cyprus. The Project was funded by the DG-Reform and co-funded and implemented by the Council of Europe in Cyprus!

I am happy that through this Project the Council of Europe could actively contribute to the highly ambitious justice reforms in Cyprus. I would like to thank our partners in Cyprus for their initiative and the European Commission for their support that made all this input of the Council of Europe possible.

The Project on the modernisation of the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR) is a part of a wider ambitious reform initiative aimed to improve the efficiency of the court system in Cyprus. This initiative of the Supreme Court was supported by the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) of the European Commission (EC). The reform is manifold and includes various actions

dedicated, for example, to (i) e-justice, (ii) court operations, (iii) judicial trainings, and (iv) reform of civil procedure (namely, adoption of new civil procedure rules).

In addition to the convergence and harmonisation of the new Rules with the procedural rules applicable across Europe, the modernisation of the CPR is expected to strengthen the Rule of Law. It will do so by ensuring the administration of justice is both expeditious and fair. The new Rules will enable the courts to deal with cases justly, at proportionate cost and more speedily thereby reducing the backlog of cases.

Efficient justice system which can respond in a timely manner to all kinds of claims while at the same time ensuring transparency and application of human rights standards is the cornerstone of a democratic and developed European state and is an important structural element of an investment and business-friendly environment.

Human Rights and all their different aspects can be found in any court procedure, including commercial disputes. For example, the right to a fair trial established in Article 6 of the European Convention implies an obligation of the states to ensure a fair and public hearing for everyone within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Both length and transparency of the court proceedings constitute elements of the right to a fair trial.

There is no doubt: a permanent improvement of the functioning of Cypriot courts will enhance effective judicial protection and the protection of human rights and the rule of law in Cyprus.

We began our joint work under the first Project (which envisages support in finalisation and adoption of new Civil Procedure Rules) just before the pandemic outbreak. Despite this factor and many other challenges, the Project, the result is achieved: the new Civil Procedure Rules are finalised and adopted by the Supreme Court. It is now of utmost importance to ensure that the reforms are implemented further, and improvements are put into practice.

This took a lot of tireless efforts and a deserved praise goes to all parties involved in the reform process. I would like to especially note and thank the Supreme Court of Cyprus, and its President Ms Panayi, the Rules Committee, and its President Mr Yiasemi and the Director of Reform and Training, Mr Erotocritou. It must be acknowledged that their constant commitment and dedication played a critical role in the finalisation of the proposed new Rules.

I would also like to express my outmost gratitude to the donor of the project – DG-Reform, whose representatives, Adamantia Manta, Sebastien Renaud, Danielle Dotto worked hand in hand with the Council of Europe team and Cypriot partners and provided advice and assistance whenever it was needed.

I would also like to recognize the hard work and contribution to the implementation of the project of the CoE team, officers and assistants: Rafaella Hadjikyriacou, Angeliki Fotopoulou – Karageorgou and Elena Yurkina.

I believe the Project demonstrated a wonderful example of how the Council of Europe's expertise and project management capabilities can be used to achieve stellar results in a rather challenging project. The achievements under the

Project were acknowledged by the Secretary General of the Council who praised it as a leading example of how legal cooperation projects supported by the European Union uphold our common values and standards as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last, but not least, I would like to reiterate that the Council of Europe stands ready to accompany Cypriot partners with its experience and expertise in the future and wish all of us success in further implementation of the reforms!

Thank you very much!