



Our common multicultural future in Europe via our own cultural heritage 2019-2021



Program for Erasmus+ meeting in Cyprus



THE OLD CITY OF NICOSIA (LEFKOSIA) WITHIN THE WALLS

The Venetian Walls of Nicosia

The Venetian Walls are a series of defensive walls which surround the capital city of Nicosia in Cyprus. The Venetian Walls has always been the trademark of Nicosia and one of the most recognizable landmarks of Cyprus. The first fortification in Nicosia which surrounds the entire city was built by King Peter II during the Lusignan period (1192 - 1489). They were completely rebuilt in the mid-16th century when Cyprus became part of the Republic of Venice. This changed following the *Great Siege of Malta* in 1565, when fears of Ottoman expansion increased and many Christian states in the Mediterranean began to strengthen their fortifications. Within the walls, lived the aristocrats and the financial elite of that era as it was the richest part of the city.

The Venetian walls of Nicosia have a circular shape, with a circumference of c. 5 km. The walls contain eleven pentagonal bastions with rounded orillons. The bastions are named after eleven families, pillars of the Italian aristocracy of the town, who donated funds towards the construction of the walls. They were protected by an 80 meter wide trench.



The Liberty Monument

The Liberty Monument is on the Podocatro Bastion of the city walls, close to the old aqueduct and a couple of minutes walk from the Famagusta Gate.

It was erected in 1973 to commemorate the 1959 prison release of the anti-colonialist EOKA fighters (1955-1959). It depicts a statue of liberty overseeing two EOKA heroes tugging on chains in order to open prison gates and release Greek Cypriot prisoners, peasants and clergy, from British colonial rule.

It symbolizes the Cypriot struggle against the British Empire during 1955-1959.



Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre - NiMAC

The Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre, associated with the Pierides Foundation, was inaugurated on January the 14th in 1994. The Arts Centre is housed in the old Power Station building, granted by the Electricity Authority to the Municipality of Nicosia. This building had been the first Power Generating Station in Nicosia. Thus, the building is a typical example of industrial architecture in Cyprus at the beginning of the 20th century which was restored in its original form.



In 1994 the Centre was awarded with the Europa Nostra Award for its architecturally sensitive restoration. During the seventeen years of its operation, the Centre organized and presented more than 70 exhibitions of contemporary art both from Cyprus and abroad.

New Nicosia City Hall

The buildings of the new City Hall in Nicosia within the Walled City were launched on the 1st March 2019 and they are located at the heart of the historic center of the city, thus restoring the seat of the municipal authority in the area after a near 100 year absence. On the site important antiquities were discovered during the first day of construction and the whole design was completely modified to match the new discoveries. Thus the new buildings that are of high quality contemporary architecture are inspired by the local features of the city and traditional architecture.



The Old Municipal Market

The Old Municipal Market was a place where people used to meet daily, sell and buy meat, fruits and vegetables, fresh olives, halloumi cheese, dried herbs and other products. The Market remained unused for years, but nowadays it hosts temporary workshops, shops for artists and creators, recycled products and works of art.



Ledra Street

Ledra Street is a major shopping thoroughfare in central, Cyprus, which links north Nicosia, the part of the city under the control of the de facto Northern Cyprus, and south Nicosia.

It is the site of the former Ledra Street barricade, across the United Nations buffer zone. The barricade symbolized the division of Nicosia between the Greek south and Turkish



north. It was removed in April 2008 and Ledra Street became the sixth crossing between the southern and northern parts of Cyprus. The name of the street refers to the ancient city-kingdom of Ledra, established in 1050 BC, that was located in the centre of the island where the capital city is today.

On March 9, 2007 the barricade of Ledra Street was demolished by a decision of the Cypriot government as a first step towards demilitarizing all of Nicosia. This is the spot where the mothers of those who are missing in the Turkish invasion gathered for years every Sunday, demanding to know what happened to their children. There is now a monument to remind of the missing and to send the message "Lest we forget!" everywhere.

Faneromeni Church

Church of Panagia Faneromeni is located in the historic part of Nicosia. It is one of the oldest churches on the island. It is thought to have been constructed in 1222 as part of a Cistercian monastery for women.

In 1715 the church had to be completely rebuilt due to the damage it suffered during a 17th century earthquake. The new church was named after an icon of the Virgin that was discovered among the ruins of the old church ("faneromeni" means "appearance" in Greek).

This three-aisled dome basilica has cross-shaped vaults and a distinct Latin influence over some of its architectural elements.

The interior of the church is decorated with frescoes. The dome features frescoes that depict God the Father (Ancient of Days) with a triangular halo around his head (a symbol of the Triune God). The ancient three-tiered iconostasis was built in 1659 and includes 61 icons.

The marble tomb, which is located in the eastern part of the area surrounding the church, contains the relics of Archbishop Kyprianos and other priests that were executed by the Ottomans in 1821. Opposite the church is the Faneromeni gymnasium, one of the most historic academic institutions in Cyprus.



Agios Kassianos Elementary School

Agios Kassianos is one of the 24 historic Neighbourhoods of Nicosia within the walls, as well as the church situated therein after which it is named.

Agios Kassianos Elementary School was founded in 1923 near the chapel of Agios Georgios funded by the church of Panagia Chrysaliniotissa and initially

functioned as a girls' school, The Agios Kassianos boy's School was founded in 1925 and also funded by church. The two schools were amalgamated in 1959 and formed the Agios Kassianos Astiki (Urban) School, where 180 students attended. In 1963, due to bicommunal riots and the formation/marking of the green (demarcation) line in Nicosia, the building was abandoned and operated in private homes on Archbishop Philotheou Street. In 1970 the school was temporarily housed in a new building at Pallouriotissa Gymnasium and from 1985 until today it is housed in an old mansion on Antigonou Street.



Pyli Ammochostou (Famagusta Gate)

Famagusta Gate is one of the three entrances into old Lefkosia through the Venetian walls. The eastern gate (Porta Juliana), known nowadays as Famagusta Gate, has been restored and operates as the Nicosia Municipal Cultural Centre. It consists of a large vaulted passage and two side rooms. The internal entrance is very impressive, while the external one opens onto the moat that surrounds the walls.



Archbishopic Palace

The Archbishopic Palace is the official residence and office of the archbishop of Cyprus located in Nicosia. The palace was built next to the "Old Archbishop's Palace" (between 1956 and 1960); in neo-Byzantine architectural style by Archbishop Makarios III. It also houses the Byzantine Museum and the Library of the Archbishopic. Since the completion of the new Archbishopic, the Old Archbishop's Palace which stands alongside it, has now housed the Folk Art Museum and the National Struggle Museum.



The Pancyprrian Gymnasium

The Pancyprrian Gymnasium was founded in 1812 by Archbishop Kyprianos at a time when Cyprus was still under Ottoman rule. It was originally called the Hellenic School of Nicosia and is the oldest high school still in operation on the island. It is located opposite the archbishopric within the walls of the old city of Nicosia. The original building was destroyed in a fire in 1920 and parts of the school were completely rebuilt in neoclassical style. Of historical interest is the crypt of the school located beneath the main entrance. This is where Archbishop Kyprianos was said to have held secret meetings with representatives of the "Philiki Etairia" (anti-Ottoman revolutionary group) in the early 19th century.



The school also incorporates a substantial collection of artifacts, art and books. The "Severios Library" which opened in 1949, holds over 60,000 manuscripts.

The House Of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios- Ethnological Museum

This manor is one of the most important surviving 18th century buildings in Lefkosia. It was once the residence of the Dragoman of Cyprus, Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, who was executed by the Ottomans in 1809. The office of Dragoman was introduced in Cyprus at the start of Ottoman rule and was abolished in 1821 with the Greek War of Independence. Dragomans acted as liaisons between the Bey and the subjugated population and were the



most important political figures after the Pasha. In the first years of Ottoman rule the dragomans were foreigners or Greek-speaking Franks and later Orthodox Greek Cypriots. Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios was the most prominent of all the dragomans of Cyprus. Over the entrance there is a marble plaque (transferred from another building) showing in the upper section a crowned winged Lion, the winged Lion of Venice, and in the lower one, religious symbols. The building was restored by the Department of Antiquities and today houses the Cyprus Ethnological Museum. In 1988 it was given the "Europa Nostra" award.

The former City Hall of Nicosia

It is located in the centre of the town, overlooking at Eleftherias square, below the Venetian walls, on D'Avila bastion. It forms the intersection of Ledra and Onasagorou streets with Stasinou, Omirou, Kostaki Pantelidi, Constandinou Palaiologou and Evagorou avenues.

