



óμιλος ιστορικού διαλόγου
και έρευνας **association**
for historical dialogue
and research tarihse1
diyalog ve arastırma derneđi

Association for Historical Dialogue and Research

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Finding a home for peace building: Turning the 'dead zone' to a 'co-operation zone'

Dear Lady/Sir

In light of the present situation in Cyprus, it is our firm belief that civil society has a crucial role to play in the preparation of active citizens; citizens that strive for peace, democracy, stability and cooperation. One of the few multi-communal associations in Cyprus dealing with issues of education in general, and the only one dealing with issues of history teaching in particular, is the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research.

The multi-communal Association of Historical Dialogue and Research aims:

- To enhance critical thinking about issues related to history and history teaching so as to promote peace, stability and democracy;
- To support diversity and multiperspectivity in the teaching of history;
- To encourage critical study and research into the history of Cyprus;
- To promote understanding and respect between ethnic groups in Cyprus;
- To ensure access and equal learning opportunities to individuals of every ability and cultural or ethnic background;
- To enhance intercultural dialogue at local, European and international levels.
- To promote and conduct research on issues of history teaching and representations of History in Cyprus

Since its foundation, the **Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR)** has enlisted members from various ethnic, linguistic, and professional backgrounds working at various educational levels in Cyprus, making the first steps of a greater effort: an effort to maintain a continuous, productive dialogue about enhanced pedagogic practices that would encourage the values of the discipline of history. Its Board, comprising Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot educators and historians, is a brilliant example of how productive cooperation; creative ideas and respect can blossom across the divide.

The AHDR trusts that by teaching and learning to cope confidently with the familiar and the less familiar, to question accounts, to come to grips with multiperspectivity, to evaluate historical significance, to construct own interpretations through disciplined argument and debate, to acknowledge and celebrate a multiplicity of potential identities, we can assist in promoting tolerance, equality, honesty, social justice and respect for human rights. All these will empower our competence as critical thinkers and citizens of Cyprus, Europe and of the world to resolve conflict by democratic means. The **AHDR** is determined to continue activities and research to promote such dialogue and historical understanding. The Association hopes in the future:

- To participate in and organise more conferences, seminars, lectures and workshops at a local, European and international level;
- To create and publish more educational or other material in printed, digital or other form; particularly material which will give voice to all ethnic communities of Cyprus;



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- To conduct and publish more studies and research;
- To design and carry out more educational and research projects, particularly on issues regarding peace education, tolerance and historical understanding in Cyprus;
- To participate in member-exchanges with counterpart organisations abroad;
- To maintain contact with a wider network of people, associations, institutions and services with similar interests at a local, European and international level.

However, one of the major obstacles that we currently face is the lack of institutional support and infrastructure for our multi-communal activities and board meetings. Under the present conditions our board meetings take place either in the south or the north of the divide, which in our mind symbolically solidifies partition of our common homeland. We urgently need to establish a base for our Association in the buffer zone, which is currently under UN administration. The public opinion in Cyprus needs, without delay, examples of successful co-operation based on mutual respect, especially on the sensitive issue of education and history teaching. In our view, the 'dead zone' can become alive again and assume a new meaning: from a symbol of separation to become a new symbol of co-operation, a "co-operation zone".

We are in a position to know that similar problems are faced by other NGOs that operate across the divide. That is why we are confident that a proper infrastructure on the buffer zone could be the first step for the establishment of sustainable co-operation within the civil society of Cyprus. More particularly, a renovated house on the buffer zone could be used as a multi-functional reconciliation centre comprising a small library, a small educational centre, a conference room and also the offices of a few other multi-communal NGOs working across the divide. In the near future the centre could house a reconciliation committee or even an EU co-ordination centre.

We acknowledge that such a development involves a great amount of expenses. However, we are sure that the benefits at the practical and symbolical level of this endeavour will compensate by far any financial sacrifices. This course of action is an investment in peace.

Finally, we would like to assure you that there are still committed citizens that consistently remain focused on the aim of reunification, peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

Looking forward to your response

Thanking you in advance

Chara MAKRIYIANNI

President of the Association
for Historical Dialogue and Research

Mete OĞUZ

Secretary of the Association
for Historical Dialogue and Research