

WELCOMING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF NICOSIA

Dear friends,

This is the third consecutive year we welcome to this fair of joy, colors and music.

We made it, my friends, so that the Mediterranean Folklore Dance Festival has become the biggest event of its kind in Cyprus. We worked with patience and determination so that we would become known not only to Mediterranean countries, but to the whole world. We receive applications the day after the end of the festival, for the next one. We are proud because our sense of responsibility, the perfect organization and the amazing conditions of living of our groups have entitled us, as the perfect organizers.

Every participating country becomes the best ambassador of Cyprus for the next year. Numerous groups have joined the waiting list of the festival for the next five years. Moreover, it is very important to us the fact that we have managed to diminish every doubt that the countries of the West Mediterranean had. We convinced them that Dance and Arts bring people together. They do not divide them. There are no green lines, no hostile feelings. Therefore proudly we announce that except Egypt, this year Syria participates in our festival. Proudly we announce that Israel and Arabs danced holding hands in last year's festival. Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots enlightened once more the route towards understanding and toleration.

Noteworthy is the how much our association offers to the aspect of multi-cultural education. Thousands of students enjoy for free the visits and performances of the groups to the schools, establish relationships and become aware of other countries' culture.

Significant is the role of our volunteers, who work hard for this festival with earnestness and responsibility. At this point I would like to thank every co-worker teacher of Physical Education with whom, together we managed the success of this festival. Thank you, Eleni, Petro, Dimitri, Pari, Maria, Georgia, Andrie, Elina, Kika, Anna, Neofyte, Chrysoula.

Moreover, I would like to thank the always-willing head-officer of the Cultural Services Mr. Akis Ioannou, Antigone Perentou, Ondina, Ikaros, Georgia, Andreas and all those who work at the Municipality for their much-appreciated willingness to help. Lastly, I would like to give my special thanks and congratulations to the Mayor Mr. Andreas Moiseos and all the municipal counselors for their decision to support us every year. From our side we promise one thing: that this cultural event will eventually become the largest Cultural Event of the Mediterranean, a second "Kataklysmos" for Larnaca with all the desirable effects on local and foreign tourism.

We will always be ready for hard work, as well as voluntary work..but because a single bird does not bring the spring, we must know who sings along with us. Now, if some people do not care and are not interested in what we offer..this is their problem. If they think that we are going to be disappointed and say "Enough..no more"..they are mistaken...We proud, strong and stubborn will continue offering love to our Country..because we were born with this and are going to die with it.

Rea Madella Ioannidou