

Report from Executive M.B.L-HSG Reunion in Cyprus, September 2022

The 2022 Executive M.B.L-HSG reunion took place last September at the most eastern tip of the EU: **Cyprus**. After arrival of EMBL Alumni from different parts of Europe on Thursday evening, the reunion kicked off with a cozy dinner at the Hotel's beachfront restaurant in the Mediterranean harbor town of Limassol. Of course, followed by drinks at the topical "Tycoon" hotel bar (and it should not have been our last representation at Tycoon's)!

Day 1 (Friday)

The official program started with the conference on Friday. This year's conference, in cooperation with the University of Cyprus and with the strong support of the Swiss Embassy in Cyprus and **H.E Mr. Christoph Burgener, Ambassador of Switzerland** to Cyprus, was held around the topics of **law & finance, humanitarian issues** and **tourism**. The University of Cyprus kindly invited us to the auditorium of the university's MBA program, with stunning facilities and surroundings of the recently renovated university campus.

The first presentation was given by outstanding lawyers from the leading Cyprus Law Firm **Elias Neocleous & Co LLC**, who presented on two up to date and very relevant topics, for Cyprus and certainly beyond: "Doing Business and Sanctions" as well as "Fund Business in Cyprus". Part two of the conference dealt with "The Committee on Missing Persons and its Mission" and was held by **Mr. Paul-Henri Arni**, UN Member, Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP). The CMP, which may not have been known to many of us initially, was established in 1981 by an agreement between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities with the backing of the United Nations (UN), to determine the fate of persons reported missing in inter-communal fighting in the 1960s, and as a result of the events of 1974. Mr Arni held a heart-taking presentation (including a video part), which filled for many of us an important knowledge gap, which was key to better understand the history and current cultural challenges of this island. The conference ended by a presentation from **Mr. Christos Angelides**, President Cyprus Hotel Managers Association on "Challenges of Today and Tomorrow for Cyprus Tourism", introducing us to Cyprus' key industry sector and the challenges it is facing today. The presentation was very interactive and triggered a lot of interesting questions from the audience.

Walking tour guided by the Swiss Embassy through the historical city of Nicosia





After the conference, the audience and speakers walked to the Kathodon Greek Restaurant, serving Greek meze platter with fresh pita bread and a variety of toppings such as chicken skewers, cheese, dips fries and vegetables. Surrounded by good food and wines, the EMBL alumni could deepen their discussions with the conference speakers. The lunch was followed by a **walking tour guided by the Swiss Embassy** through the historical city of **Nicosia**. One of the highlights was the “Green Line” (the term used for the entire demarcation line that splits Nicosia in two, making it the world’s last divided capital), making for interesting photos while discovering many hidden gems along the route like churches and museums, hidden bars and coffee shops which peppered along the route. The walking tour ended with a get-together and refreshments at the local community house **Home 4 Cooperation** close to the historical Ledra Palace Hotel. Back to Limassol, the day ended with a dinner in the harbour at St. Raphael Marina – and you guessed it, with a repeated visit at Tycoon’s till quite late.

Day 2 (Saturday)

The Saturday was full with holiday mood and a lot of wine and dine. Our first stop was **Pafos**, surrounded by the vast translucent waters of the Mediterranean, sun-soaked beaches, images, and traces of the deeds of deities, passionate people and endearing villages. Pafos was once the main center of worship to goddess Aphrodite and when you walk around the city, you can still see traces of this cult. For centuries worshipers used to come here to pray to their goddess. Many of us also did not miss out to swim three times around the **rock of Aphrodite**, which blesses with eternal youth and beauty (you will need to attend also the next reunions to find out if this is actually the case. We do hope so!).

Troodos mountains and Tsiakkas Winery



After Pafos, our bus driver took us to the **Troodos mountains**. It is the largest mountain range in Cyprus stretching across a third of the island. Located at the western side of Cyprus, its highest peak also known as Chionistra, is 1,952 meters high. A cool escape during the summer months at the green heart of the island and a snow-filled winter destination with four ski slopes (we have seen even the ski lifts!). With a history in wine making dating back to the Bronze age, Cyprus has been in the forefront of wine production for over 5,000 years. The Mediterranean climate and the fertile slopes of the Troodos mountains range created the ideal environment for vineyards to blossom. The development of indigenous varieties as well as the cultivation of other grape varieties, warrants the creation of exquisite wine. One of the local "popes" of wine is Kostas Tsiakkas. Both a landmark in its own right and an esteemed wine producer, **Tsiakkas Winery** is a must-visit attraction for wine lovers. Kostas himself guided us through his winery, followed by an extensive wine tasting with local cuisine.

On the way back to Limassol the EMBL Alumni group visited **Kourion**, which is sure for the best sights, attractions and the best things to do in Cyprus. Kourion is one of the most important and impressive archaeological sites in Cyprus. It was one of the most powerful city kingdoms of ancient Cyprus. Its majestic place, the theatre, the treasury, a stoa (covered walkway), a palaestra (ancient Greek wrestling school), the temples, the baths, the market, the archaic, the circular "temenos and *the temple of Apollo Hylates* all show just how developed were these ancient inhabitants of the region.

Group Picture - Visiting the antique archaeological site Kourion near Limassol, Mediterranean coast, Cyprus



After the visit we had some time to rest, and in the evening we met again for the gala dinner at Limassol's **famous Karatello Tavern**. Overlooking the majestic Medieval Castle in the heart of the old town of Lemesos, Karatello manages to create a perfect amalgamation of the classic and the modern, whose welcoming environment serves traditional, innovative meze dishes. We had the privilege to enjoy local cuisine by the yard of the old castle, which was a great surrounding for the festive speech of our President Matthias.

Day 3 (Sunday)

On the last day we travelled to **Ayia Napa**, one of the most famous vacation destinations in Cyprus. It is a buzzing, lively place where the sun shines throughout the year and people arrive to relax, play on the beaches, and dance all night. Ayia Napa was the starting point of a 3-hours **catamaran trip**, where we enjoyed swimming in clear turquoise warm waters, sunbathing on the nets, and refreshed ourselves with drinks from the bar.

Catamaran Trip, swimming and BBQ



After an excessive portion of sun and food from the BBQ grill, we held our **annual general meeting**, and after returning to the harbor, most of us left directly to the airport, returning to home destinations. We were farewelled by the warm sun of Cyprus – and are looking forward to our **next reunion destination in 2023: Malta!** The Executive M.B.L.-HSG Alumni Association is **thanking** our **outgoing President Matthias Schmid-Huberty** for his amazing leadership and work over the last years, continuously providing support to the success of the Alumni Association. We **welcome** our **new President Nils Günther MBL XI** and **Noémi Zubor** as **new Board member**, also helping us to organize future events and provide support to our alumni association.

By Dr. Matthias Löwenbourg-Brzezinski, Executive M.B.L.-HSG Alumni Association Board member, Communication & Member Engagement