



**REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH**

**Address by the Minister of Education, Sport and Youth,  
Dr. Athena Michaelidou  
at the “Model European Parliament” event  
Pancyprrian Gymnasium  
Friday, January 24, 2025, 10:00am**

It is a great honor to be here with you today at the opening of the Second National Session of the Model European Parliament. The MEP serves as a unique platform that upholds the values of democracy, freedom of expression, diversity, and multiculturalism, providing young individuals with a meaningful opportunity to engage with these principles. It is remarkable how such an event can leave a distinct impression on each participant, irrespective of their nationality, age, or the session in which they are involved. Delegates from member states and candidate countries of the European Union unite to address the challenges Europe is facing today, empowering the continent with the courage it rightfully deserves.

European identity is both the 'seed' and the 'fruit' of European integration. In a century of wars and destruction, Europeans took the decision to create permanent mechanisms of cooperation. In the decades to come our common identity is likely to evolve. The EU has a role to play in this evolution, because our common identity is the main source of legitimacy behind our common institutions. In general, the participants of the MEP simulation are given an opportunity to grasp the workings of the EU institutions in practice, to understand policy challenges and pressing current issues, which the EU is faced with, as well as the underlying principles, standards, and values of the EU.

Participants enhance their understanding of EU law by engaging in debates and negotiations at the EU level. By simulating the decision-making process, they gain hands-on experience defending specific positions and voting on actual legislative proposals. This approach shifts participants from being passive learners to dynamic contributors in the

educational experience. Furthermore, the project encourages participants to become more involved in democratic processes at the European level.

Plutarch mentions that “The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled”. Indeed, learning should not be limited to the four walls of a classroom. The Model European Parliament is undoubtedly a programme which allows students to step outside their comfort zone, push their boundaries, and think outside the box. Education cannot be defined as just knowledge and skills but also reasoning and growth. As educators, we want future citizens who feel a moral responsibility to respond to global crises, citizens who understand the wider world - and their place in it. Citizens who take an active role in their community, and work with others to make our planet more equal, fair and sustainable. Participation in MEP is also in great alignment with the vision of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth to cultivate literate citizens with skills, responsibility, democratic ethos, historical identity, and also respect for diversity.

Dear delegates,

Your involvement in the 2025 National Session of the Model European Parliament provides you with the opportunity to find viable solutions in problems related to Employment and Social Affairs, Civil Liberties and Justice as well as the Environment and Public Health; problems that indeed challenge the wellbeing of European citizens today. This is a great opportunity to showcase your ability to question, think critically, and collaborate with your peers to shape a better future for you and the generations to come. Regrettably, you represent a country which still endures the consequences of the violation of the fundamental principles of the United Nations, as a result of the 1974 illegal military invasion of Turkey and the ongoing occupation of part of our country. I sincerely hope that you will be inspired to build a new future based on trust, responsibility, democracy, and equality. The European Union is a political miracle. Without vision, courage and inspiration dreams die. So, rise to the occasion. Be the visionaries we need to help Europe scramble over the obstacles. Only then can a common Europe emerge.