



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

**Welcome Remarks for the
Opening Plenary Session of the Teachers Forum of the European Schools 2025
by Her Excellency
The Minister of Education, Sport and Youth
Dr. Athena Michaelidou**

***Monday, 07 April 2025, 09:00
Ledra B, Hilton Nicosia***

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you all to the 2nd Teachers' Forum of the European Schools - TFES2025. This event is organised under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the European Schools and the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, and we are honoured to host it here in Nicosia.

In line with the Cyprus Presidency's motto, «ΔΡΑΞΑΣΘΕ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ» (*Draxasthe Paideias* | "Seize Education"), this Forum brings together teachers from both the Cypriot educational system and the European Schools system to exchange best practices and share innovative teaching ideas. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all of you who have travelled from across Europe, and of course from across Cyprus, taking time away from your students and your schools to invest in your professional development.

As a former primary school teacher, I value the importance of staying attuned to current and emerging trends in education. The ideas shared and discussed at the Forum over these two days have the power to transform teaching practices and positively impact both teacher and student well-being.

I would like to warmly congratulate the fifteen selected presenters across the three-workshop series for their creative and innovative "Ideas Worth Seizing," the ten teachers who will present their work in tomorrow's World Café, and the more than thirty teachers featured in the Teachers' Exhibition. I also thank the three moderators and 12 panelists who will participate in the forum's panels, discussing the three thematic priorities and certainly the keynote speaker, Dr Eleftherios Klerides, Associate Professor at the University of Cyprus and Chair of the Baccalaureate Committee.

During a working visit to Brussels in May 2024, I had the great pleasure of visiting the European School "Brussels III"—one of the two schools that hosts a Greek language section. This visit allowed

me to witness first-hand the richness and uniqueness of the European Schools environment. The high standard of teaching and the multicultural, multilingual spirit—of which Greek is an integral part—were truly inspiring. Your work in these schools is nothing short of remarkable.

TFES2025 builds on the success of the first Teachers' Forum held in Parma last April. The feedback provided by participating teachers has guided the design of this year's programme. Together with the relevant committees, the Cyprus Presidency team has developed a strong professional development programme, offering meaningful opportunities for dialogue and collaboration among educators from across Europe and Cyprus.

I would like to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation to the Organising Committee and the entire Cyprus Presidency team for their outstanding work, dedication, and vision in bringing this event to life. Their meticulous preparation, tireless coordination, and commitment to excellence have shaped a programme that truly reflects the spirit and goals of the European Schools community.

The European Schools system is an essential component of the wider European project. Though Cyprus does not yet host a European School, our Presidency has fully embraced the aims and priorities of the system. In this context, TFES2025 focuses on three key areas that will be addressed throughout the Forum:

1. Teachers' Well-being in the School Environment
2. Pupils' Well-being in the School Community
3. Well-being in Education for Sustainable Development

These priorities speak to universal values that must be nurtured in all educational systems. The concept of well-being—*επιμερία* in Greek—is fundamental to the health of our schools, impacting every stakeholder from students and teachers to school leaders. Well-being is not peripheral to education; it is central to quality, equity, and long-term sustainability.

Our Government's plan is in alignment with these three priorities. One of the reform areas of the Ministry includes the quality and effective professional development for educators. The policy is implemented through multiple programs and actions offered by the Pedagogical Institute and cover the needs of teachers both collectively and individually. In this context, the Ministry is actively involved with the European Teacher Well-being and Career Observatory which aims mainly to emphasize the importance of teacher well-being and provide research-based recommendations.

At the same time, we aim to improve student well-being by modernizing our framework for inclusive education and reviewing legislation for special education. This will better meet the needs of students and reinforce our mission of transitioning to a modern, human-centered, and inclusive model of education. We also take great pride in our initiatives that promote well-being through sustainable development, which vary from developing and implementing programs of nearly zero energy schools to creating an exemplary certification of sustainable schools.

I thank you all for answering the call to be part of TFES2025 and for bringing forward “Ideas Worth Seizing.” Your dedication to teaching and learning ensures that the insights gained here will echo far beyond this Forum—into your classrooms, your schools, and the broader educational systems of which you are such an integral part.

I wish you a productive, inspiring experience over the next two days, and I look forward to the continued success of the European Schools system.