



DECISIVE PROJECT: **ITS FIRST RESULTS ALREADY VISIBLE**

The DECISIVE project counts already nine months of life. And even though its two main actions (study visit to Brussels and final seminar in Cyprus) have not yet taken place, it is obvious that the project contributes to cultural change, in relation to twinning and European activities of municipalities as well as the participation of citizens to these activities.

Let's take a more detailed look at the achievements of the DECISIVE project up to now:

Twinnings: It has now begun to be perceived by the municipalities that twinnings can be really useful and that they are not just synonyms with cultural exchanges or travelling opportunities.

Participation of citizens: It is important that citizens and especially organized citizen groups now understand (in those municipalities that this was not the case up to now) that they have the opportunity to work in close cooperation with municipalities and get actively involved in twinning. In at least two municipalities, the organized groups of citizens (mainly Youth Councils) already took the initiative to get in contact with their municipalities, in

order to work together on twinning projects.

Union of Cyprus Municipalities: When the DECISIVE project began, a lot of Cypriot municipalities did not even have one officer who was working on twinnings or other European activities. Moreover, the officers of those municipalities that were more organized, did not know each other and many were not cooperating or even communicating with the twinning officer of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities.



Now, most municipalities have appointed at least one officer who deals with twinning issues. These officers have now met each other and have begun to cooperate and exchange information and ideas. It is important that even the Union of Cyprus Municipalities is now aware of the European actions of its Members. The attitudes seem to begin to change...

Future major DECISIVE activities:

November: Study visit in Brussels

November: Final training session in Cyprus

November: Dissemination event: Annual General Assembly of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities

December: Quantitative Evaluation

For more information: http://www.ucm.org.cy/ENG/Promo/Promo_004.htm

High degree of satisfaction for the 1st training seminar of the DECISIVE project

As we have informed you in our previous issue, the first training seminar of the DECISIVE project was held in Limassol on May 18. During that seminar, 250 volunteers were trained in drafting proposals for funding through the Europe for Citizens and other European programs.

After the seminar, the participants filled out questionnaires in order for us to be able to measure their satisfaction with the seminar.



The questionnaire asked participants to indicate how satisfied they were (Not at all, Slightly, A Little, Satisfied, Very Satisfied) in relation to the following ten questions:

1. Had you understood the purpose of the seminar before participating in it?
2. During the seminar did you understand the purpose of it?
3. Did the structure of the seminar program (selected topics and speakers) served to achieve this purpose?
4. In your opinion was the purpose of the seminar achieved?
5. How satisfied are you in general with the presentations/speeches?
6. Do you think you have been given the opportunity to express your opinion during the seminar?
7. How useful do you consider that this seminar was for the achievement of the DECISIVE project objectives?
8. How much do you consider you have improved your knowledge on twinnings thanks to the seminar?
9. How satisfied are you with the organization of the seminar? (Meeting room, meals ...)
10. To what extent would you recommend others to participate in similar seminars in the future?

According to the responses, participants were satisfied or very satisfied with 8 of the 10 criteria listed above. Many, however, said they had not understood the purpose of the seminar before participating in it (which is explained by the fact that it was the first action of this kind in Cyprus), and that they were not able to express their opinions (the questions raised were too many and were not answered due to lack of time).

Common information session for SKILLS and DECISIVE projects

On July 2nd, a meeting was held in the Town Hall of Limassol, in the framework of the Europe for Citizens programme. It was an information session concerning two projects: the SKILLS project for the promotion of twinning between Italian and Cypriot municipalities and the DECISIVE project for the training of citizens and civil servants of the municipalities of Cyprus for the development of twinnings with other EU countries.

The meeting was organized by the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, (represented by Mrs. Kalia Martides), in cooperation with the Brussels Office of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, (represented by Mr. Fanis Pantelogiannis and Mrs. Stella Kourou).

The meeting was also attended by Mrs. Irene Demetriou, project manager of the "Europe for Citizens" Cypriot Contact Point, which is financed by the European Commission and the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus.



In total, the meeting was attended by 15 officers of Cypriot municipalities, who had the opportunity to share experiences and best practices, learn more about town twinning, the ways of finding partners and the opportunities and tools provided through various programs, in order to facilitate their participation in these activities and maximize their benefits.



The aim of the Europe for Citizens programme is to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to enable them to participate fully in the European construction. More information can be found on the website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/about_citizenship_en.php

SKILLS : Visit of Cypriot municipalities to Italy

On September 16th, representatives of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities and of the municipalities of Dali, Kato Polemidia, Lefkara, Aglantzia, Polis Chrysochous, Morfou and Engomi, travelled to Italy, in order to participate in a formal meeting with representatives of municipalities of the Lazio region, in the framework of the SKILLS project (www.skills4europe.eu/).



On September 17th, the delegation met with Italian delegates in the Savelli Palace, where Mr. Francesco Chiucchiurlotto, ANCI National Councillor, Mr. Nicola Marini, Mayor of Albano, Mr. Maurizio Sannibale, representative of the Region of Lazio, Mr. Yiannis Antoniadis, Secretary General of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, Mrs. Sara Peciarolo, director of Lazio Region for European programs, Mr. Aristos Melis, Municipal Secretary of Lakatamia and Mr. Charalambos Charalambous, Municipal Councillor of Dali presented their municipalities and organizations and discussed on collaboration opportunities.

On the same day, the delegation visited the City Hall of Anzio, (Municipality which is twinned with the Municipality of Pafos in Cyprus), where the Italian partners presented the City Hall and their city. On September 18th, the delegation visited Rome and the Vatican.

SKILLS project: Meeting of Cypriot and Italian Municipalities

On Monday, September 27th, a meeting was held between representatives from municipalities of Cyprus and Italy, with the aim to promote future collaborations, based on European policies and programs and especially the Europe for Citizens programme.

The meeting was attended by Mayors, Deputy Mayors and members of Municipal Councils, as well as members of the Association of Municipalities of the Region of Lazio (ANCI Lazio) and the Union of Cyprus Municipalities (UCM).

On behalf of the UCM, the meeting was opened by its Vice President, Mayor of Mesa Yitonia, Mr. Christos Messis. Mr. George Georgiou, Mayor of Kato Polemidia, Mr. Alexis Michaelides, Deputy Mayor of Larnaca and Mr. Yiannis Antoniadis, Secretary General of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, spoke about the partnerships of Cypriot Municipalities with those of other European countries, notably through twinning, and their importance not only for the municipalities themselves but also –and mainly- for their citizens.



The Italian elected representatives from the Municipalities of Albano Laziale, Roccaorga, Cerveteri, Anzio, Castiglione di Teverina, the mountain Municipalities of

Castelli Romani e Prenestini, the majority of Mayors and Deputy Mayors, as well as the Secretary of ANCI Lazio, made reference to the external relations and cooperation of their municipalities and, in turn, expressed their desire to cooperate with municipalities from Cyprus, which was also one of the main aim of their visit to Cyprus.



During the lunch break, the elected representatives of both sides discussed concrete proposals for cooperation. Afterwards, Cypriot officials presented their Municipalities and expressed their desire and availability for cooperation with their Italian colleagues.

This meeting was a continuation of a previous one, which took place in the first week of September, with the visit of Cypriot officials to Lazio, where they were hosted by the Local Association of Municipalities of the region (ANCI Lazio). The meetings, as well as the creation and operation of the relevant website were financed by the SKILLS project, which the two Associations implement together. SKILLS is implemented under the Europe for Citizens programme.

The Europe for Citizens programme aims to promote active European citizenship. It also aims to give citizens the opportunity to share experiences and opinions and participate in constructing an even closer Europe, united in its cultural diversity and to develop in this way the concept of citizenship of the European Union and the sense of European identity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue.

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THE UNION OF CYPRUS MUNICIPALITIES

The Union of Cyprus Municipalities was established in 1981. Even though membership is voluntary, all municipalities (33), accounting for 65 per cent of the population of Cyprus, are represented.

The main objective of the Union is to contribute to the development of local government autonomy, as well as to act as spokesman of local government interests vis-à-vis the central government and other national organisations and institutions.

The Union's decision-making power is vested in the General Assembly, which may look into and decide for all issues. The Executive Committee implements decisions taken by the General Assembly. The President of the Union represents the Union before any authority, while the Secretary is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Union.

The Union follows closely and participates in international activities related to Local Authorities and in recent years, especially after the accession of the Republic to the EU, it takes an active stand and develops relations with organisations, institutions and departments of the European Union that concern Local Authorities. In this regard, the Union has, since July 2005, opened an Office in Brussels.

UNION OF CYPRUS MUNICIPALITIES

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