



European Parliament
FORMER MEMBERS
ASSOCIATION



FMA VISIT TO CYPRUS 26-27 MARCH 2026

Profile of speakers

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LIST OF SPEAKERS



THURSDAY 26 MARCH

10.00-11.00: Hon. Harris GEORGIADES

14.00-15.00: Mr. Khassim DIAGNE

15:15-16:15 Mr. Nicodemos DAMIANOU

16:30-17:30: UN Representatives in the Committee on Missing Persons in
Cyprus

- Mr. Leonidas Pantelides
- Mr. Hakkı Müftüzade
- Mr. Pierre Gentile

FRIDAY 27 MARCH

12.15-13.15: Debate with guest speakers, FMA members
from Cyprus

- Antigoni Papadopoulou S&D 2009-2014

Mr. Nicodemos DAMIANOU

Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy



Nicodemos Damianou is a Cypriot technology expert and public official who currently serves as Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy in the Republic of Cyprus. Born in 1973 in Nicosia (Lefkosia), he has built a career that bridges advanced technological expertise and public policymaking.

Damianou pursued an extensive academic education in the field of computer science and information security. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from Brown University in the United States, followed by a PhD in Computer Security and network management from Imperial College London. He also holds a Diploma in Information Security from Imperial College and an MBA from the University of Cyprus.

Before entering government, Damianou spent over two decades working in the private sector. He held senior managerial roles within the Bank of Cyprus Group and he served as CEO of JCC Payment Systems Ltd. In January 2024, Damianou was appointed Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy by President Nikos Christodoulides. In this role, he is responsible for shaping Cyprus's national strategy on digital transformation, technological innovation, and research development.

Mr. Khassim DIAGNE

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Khassim Diagne serves as Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

Mr. Diagne brings more than 25 years of experience in international affairs and senior leadership within the United Nations system. He is currently serving as Ad Interim United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Mali, a role he has held since October 2024. Earlier in 2024, he served as Ad Interim Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). From 2021 to 2024, he was Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Protection and Operations with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).



Mr. Diagne served as Director of the Political, Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Human Rights Unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (2017-2021). He was also Regional Representative, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the United States and the Caribbean (2017), UNHCR Representative in Cameroon (2015-2016) and Liberia (2014-2015), and Deputy Representative in Pakistan (2009-2011). Between 2011 and 2013, he was Head of the Governance and Partnership Service and Secretary of the Executive Committee at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva. Earlier in his career, he worked with UNHCR in Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Kenya and Somalia.

He holds a Master of Arts in Modern Languages from Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Senegal, and a Master of Arts in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, United States. He is fluent in English, French and Wolof.

Mr. Pierre GENTILE

UN representative in the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus



In September 2024, Pierre Gentile has been nominated as the UN representative in the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP).

Until September 2024, he was leading the Center for Social Integration of Refugees (CSIR) in Lausanne. A state service following some 3'000 refugees who, for the first years after they have been admitted to Switzerland, receive a monthly integration income and are encouraged to complete their education and find employment in the region.

In 2021 he received, with the CSIR, a prize from CivicLab – CivicChallenge, a competition of innovative ideas and projects from and for the public sector in Switzerland, with a project linked to digital governance and refugee's social and professional insertion.

Previously he worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from 1996 to 2019. He spent more than ten years in the field as delegate, head of office, and protection co-ordinator. He worked in the Balkan, in Afghanistan, in Latin America, Africa, and the middle east.

In 2007, he moved to the Protection Division at ICRC headquarters in Geneva, to establish the unit working the Protection of Civilian Population (PoC). In this function he also led an interagency work to create professional standards for protection work.

From 2012 to 2014 he was in charge of one of the flagship projects for the Red Cross and Red Crescent: the “Health Care in Danger” project initiated after the International Conference of the Movement in 2011. In 2014, he was appointed as head of ICRC's Protection Division and the Central Tracing Agency.

THURSDAY 27 MARCH

Hon. Harris GEORGIADES

Chairman of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee of the Cyprus Parliament



Harris Georgiades (born 1972, Nicosia) is Chairman of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee of the Cyprus Parliament, Chairman of the “Clerides Institute” and a former Minister of Finance of the Republic of Cyprus (April 2013-December 2019). He holds a BA and an MA in International Relations and Economics from the University of Reading, UK. He was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2011. He took over as Minister of Finance at the height of a severe financial crisis and was successful in restoring the soundness of the Cyprus economy, placing it on a path of solid economic growth, surplus budgets, rating upgrades and banking sector restructuring. He was a long-serving member of the Eurogroup and the ECOFIN and was elected Chairman of the Board of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for the period 2014-15. In 2016 he was selected by POLITICO as one of 28 influential Europeans. Between 2020-23 he served as Deputy Leader of the Democratic Rally and in 2021 he was re-elected to the House of Representatives. He is the author of two books and has appeared extensively in local and international media.

Mr. Hakkı MÜFTÜZADE

Turkish Cypriot Member of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

Mr. Müftüzade has been appointed as the Turkish Cypriot Member of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus on January 1st, 2021. Mr. Müftüzade brings with him extensive experience in diplomacy, having previously served for eight years as Special Advisor of two Turkish Cypriot leaders between 2001 and 2010. He also served as the Representative of the Turkish Cypriot community in the United Kingdom from 1996 to 2001. From 1989 to 1990, Mr. Müftüzade was the Assistant to Mr. Rüstem Tatar, the then-Turkish Cypriot Member of CMP.

He was also a founding member of the Cyprus Turkish Education Foundation in 1994 and later served as the Secretary of the Cyprus Turkish Football Federation from 2002 to 2004.

Mr. Müftüzade completed a Degree in Policy Making & Administration from the University of Essex, United Kingdom. He is married and has one child.



THURSDAY 26 MARCH

Mr. Leonidas PANTELIDES

UN Representative of the Greek Cypriot Community on the Committee of Missing Persons in Cyprus



Leonidas Pantelides was appointed as Representative of the Greek Cypriot Community on the Committee of Missing Persons in Cyprus, in May 2019.

Leonidas Pantelides is a retired ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus. He has served as ambassador in Stockholm, Athens, Moscow, Geneva, and Washington DC., from where he retired in 2018. He also served as Director of the Diplomatic Office of the President, and as Director of Middle East Affairs. During the first term of President Glafcos Clerides he was a member of the Working Group on the Cyprus Problem. Before becoming a diplomat in 1987, Leonidas Pantelides worked as a University Lecturer.

Mr. Pantelides studied Philosophy and holds a PhD. He has published two books, one on Philosophy and one on the Cyprus Problem co-authored with Ahmet Sözen.

FRIDAY 27 MARCH

Antigoni PAPADOPOULOU
(S&D 2009-2014, Cyprus)

Antigoni Papadopoulou is a Cypriot politician, writer, and artist with a long record of public service at local, national, and European level. She began her political career in local government, serving as Municipal Councilor and later becoming the first woman Mayor of Morphou, her Turkish-occupied hometown, where she represented the rights and hopes of displaced citizens.



She served as a Member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus, where she chaired the Committee on Economic Affairs and Budgeting – the first woman to hold this position. From 2001 to 2009 she was a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, serving as Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Economic Affairs.

In 2009 she was elected to the European Parliament, becoming one of the first two Cypriot women to serve as MEPs. During her mandate she worked on citizens' rights, employment, health, economic issues and Women's Rights and Gender Equality. She has remained active in national political life, most recently as Vice President of the Democratic Alignment.

Alongside her political career, she is an accomplished painter and the author of four books, including a poetry collection, as well as of numerous articles and publications on political, social, and cultural issues.