

IOM Regional Director's visit to Cyprus

Mr. Ola Henrikson, IOM Regional Director for the European Economic Area, the European Union and NATO visited Cyprus on 20 & 21 June. During his visit, Mr. Henrikson held meetings with various representatives of the Cypriot Government, EU and UN Agencies. At the meeting he had with the Minister of Interior, Mr. Nikos Nouris, it was stressed the intention to strengthen and expand IOM's cooperation with the Government of Cyprus.

By the end of the meeting, the Minister explained that IOM 'is a very important organization, which cooperates fully with the Ministry of Interior on migration issues, especially on return issues and various social integration programmes'. Mr. Henrikson explained that the role of the IOM focuses on issues of return, integration and reception, especially of unaccompanied minors. He conveyed to the Minister the IOM's intention to "strengthen and expand cooperation where there is a need".



"We understand the challenges that Cyprus faces due to the large number of arrivals in relation to its population," he said, referring to the topics covered during the meeting, noting that the number of Ukrainian citizens arriving in Cyprus was also part of the discussions.

During the meeting at the Police Headquarters between Mr. Henrikson and the Chief of Police, issues related to the fight against the crime of human trafficking and the support of victims, voluntary returns and the reintegration of migrants in their countries and the training of police officers in the fight against human trafficking were discussed.

Internship with the aim of acquiring work experience for teenagers – Additional integration support

IOM Cyprus successfully organised in Limassol on 28th of June, the event for the announcement of a subsidized Internship Scheme for 37 teenagers, as part of the Semi-Independent Living for Unaccompanied Migrant Children over 16 years old programme implemented by the International Organization for Migration and fully funded by the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare of the Republic of Cyprus. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides 37 teenagers of its SIL programme additional integration support through a six (6) month internship. As a result, the 37 teenagers will gain work experience, specialized knowledge, and skills targeting their smooth access to the job market.

Through the Internship Scheme, IOM seeks to encourage cooperation with employer federations OEB, CCCI and their members. Teenagers will benefit from gaining work experience. The IOM monthly internship allowance will be paid by IOM, which is fully funded by the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare of the Republic of Cyprus.



The event was welcome addressed by Natasa Xenophontos Koudouna, Head of Office, IOM Cyprus, who inter alia said: "IOM seeks continuous cooperation with the local community, legal guardians of the children, career guidance counsellors and teachers,



employment counsellors and employers, regarding issues of smooth integration and inclusion of the children of its programme and their active contribution to the local community” and ended by adding that IOM encourages the employers to use the internship as an opportunity to hire the migrants after their internship ends. The event was complemented by guest speakers such as Chara Tapanidou, Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare of the Republic of Cyprus, and Lena Panayiotou, Director, Industrial Relations & Social Policy at Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation (OEB). The criteria of the Internship Scheme were named in detail during the presentation of Stelios Christou, IOM Cyprus, Area Project Assistant.



More than 50 people attended the event, among them representatives from the Ministry of Labour, the Department of Labour, the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, employers, translators, and beneficiaries, 15 girls and 16 boys from the SIL programme. The event ended successfully with the children being interviewed for internships by the employers who attended.

Migrant Centers are full, and irregular arrivals continue - DTM January – June 2022

The Republic of Cyprus has been a front-liner European Union (EU) country in terms of irregular flows in the past five years. According to the Ministry of Interior, in 2021 the total percentage of applicants and beneficiaries in the Republic of Cyprus reached 5% of the country’s population, the highest number of applicants/beneficiaries of international protection per capita in the EU. 9,208 arrived since the beginning of the year 2022. This number is in addition to 25,000 Ukrainian nationals who have arrived since the war broke out in Ukraine and the remaining 12,000 on the island free to work.

“According to CODECA NGO providing services at First Reception Center Pournara in Kokkinothrimithia Cyprus, a total of 9,208 migrants have been registered between January – June 2022 which is double the total reported 4556, at the same period in 2021. According to the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare of the Republic of Cyprus between January and June 2022 there were 450 new arriving Unaccompanied migrant children (UMC) in addition to the 900 UMC residing in the country including those in shelters.

On 30 June 2022, the Asylum Service counted a total number of 2,158 migrants and refugees accommodated at all centers, 1,778 at Pournara Reception Center – 300 residents at Kofinou Reception and Accommodation Center and 80 residents at Limnes Reception Center.

The main route of arrivals to Cyprus continues to be the northern part of Cyprus – for 2022 between January – June 2022, the number of people who arrived by land is 7,860 mostly from Turkey and by sea 1348, while in the same period for 2021 people who arrived by land are 3,900 and by sea 661.

Main nationalities accommodated at Pournara first reception camp on 30 April 2022 are: Nigeria 134, Pakistan 353, Republic of Congo 180, Syria 362, Afghanistan 187, Bangladesh 246, Somali 126, Cameroon 38, Sierra Leone 10, Iran 37, Turkey 37, India 17, and other countries 51; marking a demographic change in terms of nationalities who are now increasingly higher from sub-Saharan Africa.

Soft skills training workshop and job placement

In the context of the Semi-independent Living Programme, a Soft skills Training Workshop for unaccompanied teenagers was organized in Limassol on 13 April 2022, which was conducted during their afternoon computer class. The aim of the workshop was to help acquire skills for independent living and present and provide teenagers with the tools needed for job search. The workshop included practical training on how to create a CV, how to register on Department of Labor platform as unemployed and be matched with employers, get job referrals, and prepare for job interviews. 20 aged out children are benefiting today from employment.



The two-hour Training Workshop was attended by 14 beneficiaries (all boys) from Somalia, Syria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The beneficiaries attended the presentations and showed great interest, and during the practical training, they put a lot of effort into writing their CVs. The presence of translators ensured excellent communication between the Trainers and IOM staff and the children and facilitated the children's understanding of the training material.

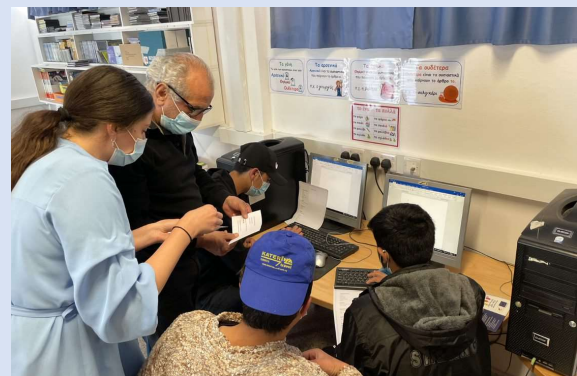


Area Project Assistant Mr. Stelios Christou welcome addressed the workshop on behalf of IOM. Mrs. Charis Charilaou, IOM Social Worker, presented on the job integration plan and the registration of beneficiaries on the Online Platform of the Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour. Finally, Ms. Maria Sardou, computer class trainer of Educational Centres, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Cyprus guided the teenagers on the use of PCs. Mrs. Maria Nicolaou, coordinator of Social Welfare office Limassol District attended the workshop on behalf of the Legal Guardian.



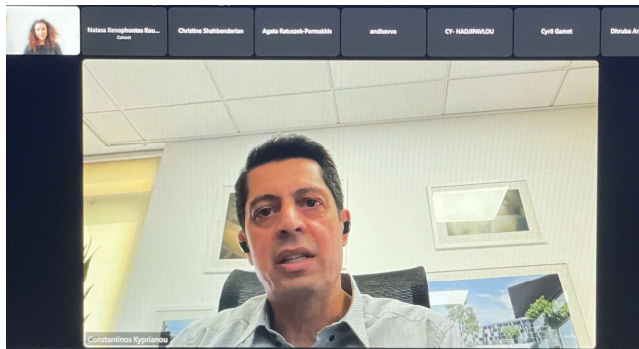
By the end of the workshop teenagers are now capable of pursuing their own job search on the Department of Labour's job platform.

(The Semi-independent Living Programme is funded and implemented by the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare of the Republic of Cyprus. The Programme aims to provide unaccompanied migrant teenagers access to housing, education and language learning, health services, psychosocial support, and facilitate access to the labour market. IOM seeks to help the beneficiaries with their early integration into the local community.)



Supporting reintegration in the context of return

In the framework of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme IOM Cyprus successfully organized on 9 June the online event "Supporting reintegration in the context of return". During the event, the value of AVRR as a key pillar of migration management and the value of the reintegration support offered by AVRR were highlighted.



IOM Cyprus assisted during the period October 2020 - June 2022, 467 migrants voluntarily return to their countries of origin. At the same time, 96 of them received reintegration assistance; with the largest number coming from Nepal, Bangladesh, and India.

The event was complemented by guest speakers from the Department of the Civil Registry and Migration Department, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, and IOM Nepal.

The event was also addressed by the Head of the European Funds Unit of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, the Head of the IOM Office in Cyprus, and the IOM Regional Office in Brussels.



The event was summed up by the screening of a video of testimonies from beneficiaries from Nepal and Cameroon about the contribution of IOM AVRR programme returnees. The AVRR programme in Cyprus was co-funded by the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund and the Republic of Cyprus.

