



ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ  
ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΩΝ, ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΩΝ  
ΚΑΙ ΤΕΧΝΩΝ



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## Press Release

### **Transboundary cooperation is essential to address the climate crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean - Middle East, stress scientists and international policy makers**

The International Conference on "**Climate Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East**" ([emmeclimate2024.cyi.ac.cy](http://emmeclimate2024.cyi.ac.cy)) was a resounding success, even though it was held in the middle of intensifying hostilities in the region. The Conference was co-organized by the [Cyprus Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts](http://www.cyi.ac.cy), and [The Cyprus Institute](http://www.cyi.ac.cy) from 26 to 28 September 2024, in Larnaca, and was attended by 250 scientists and policy makers of international repute from 22 countries, with a strong presence from countries of our region.

During the conference, strategies for mitigating the impacts of Climate Change, at the regional level, were presented and the technoeconomic, legal, social and ethical aspects of the transition to a green, zero-carbon economy were analyzed. Measurements and model predictions of climate change and its impacts, particularly in the energy, water, food and agriculture, ocean, health and cultural heritage sectors were also discussed. There was extensive discussion and strong agreement on the need for cross-border actions.

The extremely critical situation in the region, due to the geopolitical conflicts, was referred to by Professor **Jeffrey Sachs**, Director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Network (UN-SDSN), indicating that these conflicts also make it difficult to implement a regional climate action plan. This is why Cyprus' initiative for regional cooperation to address the climate crisis, he stressed, is extremely important, as it is a bridge that allows scientists and politicians to work together to collectively seek solutions in a region where political-military confrontation prevails. Without a regional approach, Professor Sachs concluded, there is no way the nations of the region can solve their problems.

**Ernest J. Moniz**, Professor of Physics at MIT and former US Secretary of Energy, stressed that the climate debate must be part of a simultaneous discussion alongside the issues of energy, security and social equity, otherwise the resistance from society will be significant. He stressed the global importance of implementing the Cyprus Climate Change Initiative in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. The transition to a carbon economy, Professor Moniz stressed, should ensure energy security and social equity, while indicating that clean (green) electricity is necessary for this transition, but not sufficient, as clean fuels, smart grids and energy storage are also necessary.

The Opening Ceremony of the Conference was declared by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. **Nicos Christodoulides**, who announced the revival and strengthening of the Initiative undertaken by the Republic of Cyprus in 2019 for a regional cooperation to address the impacts of Climate Change at the regional level. In particular, President Christodoulides reported that the Government of Cyprus has taken a decision for the active operational implementation of the Action Plan as decided at the COP27 Summit in November 2022.



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Prince **Hassan Bin Talal** of Jordan, a prominent international figure known for his initiatives to address climate and environmental threats, warned that prolonged heat waves and sandstorms may render areas of the Middle East and North Africa uninhabitable. As a result of extreme disasters, he noted, more than 20 million people have been displaced every year over the past decade, making the issue of "climate refugees" a global problem that requires a universal solution.

In her speech at the end of the Conference, the Deputy Minister of European Affairs, **Marilena Raouna**, stressed the great importance that the Cypriot Government attaches to the Regional Initiative, the relaunch of which was announced by the President of the Republic, specifying that the operation of the interim secretariat of the regional initiative will be entrusted to the Cyprus Institute. She re-emphasized points made earlier by the Minister of Environment Ms. **Maria Panayiotou**, by the Minister of Energy Mr. **George Papanastasiou** and the Director General of the EU CLIMA Directorate Mr. **Kurt Vandenberghe**. She made a special reference to Cyprus' privileged position as the only country in the Middle East region that is a member of the European Union and pointed out the opportunities that are emerging with the assumption of the presidency of the European Union by Cyprus in 2026.

The Conference was attended by leading scientists, affiliated with more than 40 educational and research institutions and 12 National and International Academies. In addition to the Cypriot Ministers, there was strong presence from political personalities from the region, Europe and North America. At least 10 of the policy makers who held ministerial appointments in the recent past were actively involved in the deliberations.

In addition to the announcement relaunching of the Regional Climate Initiative led by the Cyprus government, most impressive was the unanimity on the need for regional cooperation on climate action, especially those of transboundary nature, by the participants to the Conference from countries including Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, in the background of the intensifying hostilities in the Middle East.

The International Conference on "Climate Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East" is supported by the European Commission Representation in Cyprus.