(RE)CLAIMING OUR SPACE

CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGIES TO COUNTER GENDERED DISINFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED VIOLENCE

Meet the Speakers

04 March 2026 | Nicosia, Cyprus | The Classic Hotel

Susana Elisa Pavlou

DIRECTOR - MIGS
PRESIDENT- WAVE NETWORK

Susana has over 20 years of experience in research, policy development, and policy monitoring and evaluation with particular expertise on gender equality and violence against women. She is widely recognised as a gender equality expert and has served as a senior researcher on a numerous projects and studies commissioned by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and UN Women among others. She has served as National Expert for the Network of Experts in Gender Equality, Social Inclusion, Health and Long-term Care (EGGSI), and as Independent Expert for DG Employment's Mutual Learning Programme (MLP). She has also served as Expert for the EWL Observatory on Violence against Women, and as Board Member and member of the Executive Committee of the European Women's Lobby. She has served as President of the national Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Family Violence and is currently President of the WAVE Network.

Marilena Kyriakou

EDUCATION MANAGER -
BRITISH COUNCIL CYPRUS

Marilena Kyriakou is an Education Manager at the British Council with over 10 years of experience in project delivery. Before joining the British Council, she was working for civil society in areas such as education, sustainable development and capacity building for CSOs. She is currently responsible for managing local and regional projects in the Education and Cultural Engagement portfolio ranging from topics such as climate change, gender equality, social cohesion and 21st century skills.

Josie Christodoulou

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSIONER
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Josie Christodoulou was appointed Commissioner for Gender Equality on 1 March 2023. She coordinates and monitors the implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality, in collaboration with all ministries and deputy ministries. She chairs the National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR) and established the Civil Society Platform to enhance social dialogue on gender equality. She worked as Policy Coordinator at the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS) and served as Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on gender mainstreaming in foreign policy. Ms. Christodoulou holds a degree in Psychology from the University of Indianapolis (USA) and a master's degree in Racial Equality Studies from Middlesex University (UK).

Maria Angeli

SENIOR RESEARCHER AND
PROJECT COORDINATOR - MIGS

Maria Angeli is a sociologist with over 18 years of experience in gender equality, women's rights, and media representation. She serves as a member of the Council of Europe's Pool of International Experts on Gender Equality and has worked as a Gender Expert on studies commissioned by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the European Commission. Maria is the National Coordinator for Cyprus in the Global Media Monitoring Project. Since 2008, she has been a Senior Researcher at the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, leading EU-funded projects focused on gender policy, media, and education. She is an active member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and the International Network on Leave Policies and Research. Maria holds an MA in Gender and Media from the University of Sussex.

Anna Koukkides-Procopiou

PRESIDENT - POLITEIA CENTRE FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL THINKING
FOUNDER - WOMEN-ACT CYPRUS

Anna Koukkides-Procopiou is an international security, foreign policy and gender expert. A Yale Peace Fellow and a member of EMI-Eastern Mediterranean Initiative run jointly by Geneva Centre for Security and Swisspeace, she also heads as President the Politeia Centre for Socio-Political Thinking, based in Cyprus and is the founder of Women Act-Cyprus, an international network promoting women in the public sphere. She has extensive experience in the corporate sector and in government, as she is the former Minister of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus (2023-2024). Anna has also co-founded and currently serves on the steering committee of CWBC (Cyprus Women Bicommunal Coalition) campaigning for the implementation of UNSCR1325 and the meaningful participation of women in the Cyprus Peace process- the work of CWBC has been recently commended for by UNSG Guterres. A former consultant with International Crisis Group and Senior Fellow of the Cyprus Centre for European and International Affairs-University of Nicosia, she is also a member of the UN Senior Women Talent Pipeline and a World Bank expert on Women, Business and the Law in the context of Cyprus. She has collaborated in various capacities with many international organisations, including the OSCE, UN Women, Interpeace and CMI. Anna read Economics and History at UCL and continued her postgraduate studies in International Relations at LSE. She also holds a certificate in Religion and Politics from MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale University.

Mine Atli

LAWYER, ACTIVIST

Mine Atlı is a lawyer, activist, and long-standing advocate for gender equality in Northern Cyprus. For more than two decades, she has worked with KAYAD to combat violence against women, strengthen support mechanisms, and promote social change through law, education, and advocacy. She has led numerous national and international projects, delivered trainings to institutions, universities, and schools, and remains committed to amplifying women’s voices and rights at both local and international levels. She was the first female party leader in the Turkish Cypriot Community and is a former elected member of the Nicosia Turkish Municipality where she lead the movement to successfully open the first municipal run shelter in the northern part of Cyprus. She won the IVLP award for Social Innovation and change and was one of the first members of the Gender Equality Technical Commitee.

Alyssa Ahrabare

ADVOCACY MANAGER - OSEZ LE FEMINISME

Alyssa Ahrabare is Advocacy Manager at Osez le Féminisme, a leading French feminist organisation. She is a legal expert specialised in European law and international human rights, with over ten years of experience advocating for women's rights. Her work focuses on combating violence against women and girls, including online sexual exploitation and cyber violence, as well as improving migrant women's access to rights and justice. At Osez le Féminisme, she coordinates advocacy strategies, policy analysis and partnerships at national and European levels, working closely with civil society organisations and public institutions to strengthen legal frameworks and victim protection mechanisms.

Miriam Fernandez

PROFESSOR - OPEN UNIVERSITY KENT

Miriam Fernandez is a Professor of Responsible Artificial Intelligence at the Knowledge Media Institute (KMi), Open University (OU), UK. Her research agenda revolves around advancing Responsible AI, ensuring that technological innovation aligns with ethical principles and societal values. Her pioneering work spans diverse domains, from algorithmic transparency and fairness to the societal implications of AI deployment. By integrating AI techniques with a human-centred approach, she fosters solutions that prioritise social responsibility, transparency, and inclusivity. With a portfolio of more than 100 scientific articles in some of the best conferences and journals in her field, and having won numerous external grants supporting her research, Professor Fernandez has significantly influenced the discourse in the field of technology development and its impact on society. Professor Fernandez is Equality and Diversity Champion for both KMi and the OU, where she leads the Responsible AI stream of the Center for Protecting Women Online, a flagship initiative that plays a critical role in mitigating the harmful effects of technology on women and girls worldwide.

Anna Zobnina

STRATEGY AND POLICY DIRECTOR - EUROPEAN NETWORK OF MIGRANT WOMEN

Anna Zobnina is a feminist policy expert with over 15 years of experience in European and international advocacy on women's rights, migration, and violence against women. She specialises in male violence, sexual exploitation, and the rights of migrant and refugee women. Her work spans research, policy development, and movement strategy, with a focus on centring sex-based rights in law and practice. She is currently the Strategy and Policy Director of the European Network of Migrant Women and contributes expertise to civil society and policy processes across Europe.

Nadia Karayianni

HEAD OF BUSINESS - CARDET
BOARD MEMBER - NGO SUPPORT CENTER

Nadia Karayianni has extensive experience and a proven track record in the management of complex projects with strong social and business impact. She has held senior roles as Conferences Director and Project Manager at IMH, Communication and COO at the Office of the President of the House of Representatives, and Research Officer at the University of Cyprus. Notably, she served as Project Manager at the NGO Support Centre, where she was responsible for the implementation of the Civil Society Empowerment Programme, strengthening the capacity and sustainability of Cyprus' civil society sector. Since 2007, she has been an active member of the NGO Support Centre and the NGO Working Group on Legislative Reform, contributing at an institutional level to policy dialogue and advocacy. She has also served in leadership positions as Vice-President of the Cyprus Youth Board and the Cyprus Youth Council. In parallel, she has maintained over 30 years of active volunteer engagement with the Girl Guides Association of Cyprus, including roles as International Commissioner and Advocacy Champion. She is now the Head of Business Development for CARDET and Learning Edge. Nadia holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Relations, an MSc in Management with a specialisation in Human Resources, and an MA in Gender Studies —bringing a multidisciplinary, people-centred and policy-aware perspective that strongly supports innovation, inclusion, and impact-driven project delivery.

Eleni Karaoli

PRESIDENT -
CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCATES

Eleni N. Karaoli is a founding member and President of the Civil Society Advocates foundation. Eleni is a legal consultant. Her main interest is the development and strengthening of organized civil society with a special emphasis on human rights and gender equality. She is an active member of various NGOs and NGO networks as a volunteer for the last 20 years. Her primary interests are gender equality, social justice and inclusion and poverty. She is, among other, chairperson of the Cyprus Women's Lobby, vice-president of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN). She envisions a strengthened and empowered organized civil society, highlighting the role CSOs can play in the development of wider society and the state in general.

Eleni Siamptani

GENERAL SECRETARY -
CYPRUS YOUTH COUNCIL

Eleni Shiamptani is originally from Orounta and the occupied village of Assia. She is a graduate of the University of Cyprus, where she studied History and Archaeology (specialising in History), and she holds a postgraduate degree in Gender History from the University of Glasgow. She works as a researcher at the Promitheas Research Institute. Her research interests focus on the history of women in Cyprus, gender relations, women’s participation in political life from a historical perspective, as well as processes of identity formation through gender. Since her school years, she has been actively involved in youth issues through student councils and students associations, and she was recently elected to the Board of the Cyprus Youth Council, serving as General Secretary. Among her main priorities are the reunification of our island, the promotion of social well-being, and the building of a more human-centred society, where all members have the right to live with dignity, equality, and equity.

Maria Epaminonda

DIRECTOR - CYPRUS FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION

Maria Epaminonda is the Executive Director of the Cyprus Family Planning Association, a non-governmental organization with a long-standing contribution to sexual health and rights. With 22 years of experience in civil society, she has played a pivotal role in the Association's growth and recognition. Maria is known for building trust-based partnerships across sectors and contributing to key strategies and advocacy efforts. Her leadership, empathy, determination, and commitment to social justice continue to inspire her team, volunteers, and partners. She has a strong interest and active involvement in issues related to sexuality education and the sexual abuse of children, violence against women, gender equality, and youth participation.

Meral Birinci-Sonan

BARRISTER-AT-LAW, ACTIVIST

Meral Birinci-Sonan is a Barrister-at-Law, a practicing lawyer in Cyprus with 21 years of experience; runs a law firm in Nicosia; her day to day practice involves negotiation and mediation for clients or with clients as well as litigation. She is an active member of the civil society; currently serves as one of the members in the steering committee of CWBC (Cyprus Women Bicommunal Coalition) and in the advisory board of CIReN (Cyprus Investigative Reporting Network), member of the Bicommunal Technical Committee on Gender Equality and has served as a member of the Bicommunal Technical Committee on Humanitarian Matters during the presidency of Mr. Akinci.

Daphne Demetriou

RESEARCHER, PROJECT COORDINATOR - MIGS

Daphne Demetriou is a researcher and project coordinator at the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS), where she works at the intersection of social research, advocacy, and training on gender equality and violence against women and girls. She has led national and European-level projects, including co-production of cross-country studies in partnership with the Council of Europe and the European Union, translating complex research into actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners. Her ethnographic and qualitative methodological expertise has been put to use across diverse contexts, from NGOs to multinational corporations, centering institutional strategy on the realities of the people they impact. She is a research collaborator at the Masculinities Research Hub, University of Cyprus and is currently pursuing a PhD in Sociology on reproductive decision-making, exploring the personal, social, and structural dimensions of choice.

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