

**Opening Speech by His Excellency
the Minister of Education and Culture Mr. Costas Kadis
to The European Student Conference in Mathematics
EUROMATH 2014
24 – 28 April 2014, Nicosia, Cyprus**

Dear Participants,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to The European Student Conference in Mathematics – EUROMATH 2014, in Nicosia.

Cyprus is a country with a tradition in Mathematics and Sciences. Nearly 50% of our students follow graduate and postgraduate Tertiary Education courses and from these, about one in ten do so in Mathematics, Sciences and Technology courses at Universities both in Cyprus and abroad. This achievement is due to our Education System and owed to a great extent to the efforts of organizations such as the Cyprus Mathematical Society and the THALES foundation.

The Education System in Cyprus is undergoing a major reform. This is the fourth academic year of implementing a New Mathematics Curriculum.

The reform is based on the principles that:

- (a) Mathematical concepts should be explored in a way that stimulates the interest and curiosity of students
- (b) The new curriculum places emphasis on problem solving
- (c) Technology and ICT is an integral part of Mathematics education and
- (d) All students must gain experience through a quality Mathematics program.

New teaching material, textbooks, e-books, teacher aids and computer applications are being prepared based on the proposed curriculum and the experience gained from the three years of implementing the new concepts.

A major shift from dry mathematical knowledge to vibrant, fertile, creative and applicable to real life mathematical experience, is pursued through active student involvement in accordance with international trends. Influences coming from international projects such as PISA surveys, and international Mathematics competitions are taken into consideration. In 2012 Cyprus participated for the first time in the PISA project and the outcomes have not been the desired ones. This enabled us to look closer at our procedures and methods, identify the reasons for our results, and reflect on ways to improve our results. We look forward to a better outcome in PISA 2015.

The Republic of Cyprus and the Ministry of Education and Culture strongly support the EUROMATH 2014 Conference and the Le-MATH Project. New teaching tools and methods proposed during this Conference will be valuable inputs in our thinking and reflecting on methods to implement improved teaching and learning in Mathematics, that will lead to improved performance.

Dear participants, I notice, with pleasure, that you will have a chance to see some of our historical monuments and get a feel of our long history and rich civilization. Unfortunately, the people of Cyprus, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, are still divided following the Turkish invasion in 1974. Efforts for a just solution to The Cyprus problem are underway and we hope for such a solution to be reached.

I extend my greetings to you and congratulations to the Cyprus Mathematical Society, the Le-MATH Project and the Thales Foundation which co-organize this extremely important event.

I wish you every success in your workings and a pleasant stay in Cyprus

Costas Kadhis

Minister of Education and Culture