



# AFICS-Cyprus Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL

The recent terrorist attacks Orlando, Paris, Brussels, Nice and Munich and reports of the Zika virus making its way around the world as well as storm cycles and increased intensity of extreme weather events may have you wondering whether it's wise to jet off for a vacation this summer. These events certainly evoke fear, anger, and sadness in people around the world. Are we really living and traveling on danger's edge this year?

Global warming encompasses many factors from drought to increased precipitation and storm surge, rising sea levels, increased incidence of pests and disease along with others. Everyone seems to agree the earth's temperatures are on the rise and storm cycles have increased both in number and ferocity as climatic changes have occurred.

Admittedly, there are arguments as to the cause of these changes, but prevailing science seems firmly on the side of man's intervention in the atmospheric conditions of today.

Cyprus, perhaps surprisingly, is considered by the millions of tourists as a country of stability, peace and security. Cyprus tourism is massively boosted this year after the terrorist attacks hit a number of countries including Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia. Cypriot authorities have upped security island-wide since the Paris and Nice attacks with a visible presence of armed police officers on the streets. For those thinking of spending their holidays here, I am sure that they will enjoy Cyprus as much as we do.

Whatever your decision, do have a great summer.

*Miriam Pericleous*  
Newsletter Editor

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## Fourth AFICS-Cyprus Assembly Meeting

The fourth AFICS-Cyprus Assembly meeting took place on 8 March 2016 at HQ UNFICYP. Thirty-six members attended, as well as three represented by the power of attorney, totaling a quorum of 39.

The President welcomed all present, stating that the Association had 79 active fee-paying members during 2015, compared to 77 members in 2014 and 64 in 2013. Included on the agenda were reports by all Executive Committee Members for the year 2015.

Due to his impending re-location to Denmark, Mr Gert Schmidt, Deputy President/Secretary, did not stand for re-election. The President extended him a special vote of thanks for his untiring and selfless efforts on behalf of AFICS to date. Just prior to the end of his last meeting, the Deputy President provided

a short PowerPoint presentation on the UNJSPF administered "Emergency Fund" which was very well received by all participants.

Many then retired to the HQ UNFICYP cafeteria for a most enjoyable lunch.



## TRAVEL HEALTHY

### Personal Protection Measures against the Zika Virus

Since the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil are fast approaching and a large number of people (an estimated half a million) are planning to be there, it is useful and important to know how to protect yourself against the Zika Virus Disease. This, as well as other diseases (e.g. the Dengue Fever), are all transmitted by mosquitos.

The following protective measures are necessary and, by and large, effective:

- *Wear long sleeved blouses or shirts and long trousers, socks, shoes that cover your feet and a hat.*
- *Stay in air-conditioned buildings or in places with doors and windows covered by mosquito nets.*
- *Sleep under mosquito nets if you are outdoors, in buildings without air-conditioning or places that do not use mosquito nets on the doors and windows.*
- *Use only approved (licensed) mosquito repellents which have been proven safe and effective when used in accordance with instructions, even in pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers.*
- *Always follow the product's instructions on the label.*
- *Multiple use of the mosquito repellent should be in accordance with instructions.*
- *Do not spray the mosquito repellent on skin covered by clothes.*
- *If you are using sunscreen products together with mosquito repellents, apply the sunscreen first.*
- *Do not use mosquito repellents for infants under two months of age, and mosquito repellents containing eucalyptus oil for children younger than three.*

*Dr Michael Voniatis*  
World Health Specialist

## AFICS-Cyprus Membership and Finances

On 15 June 2016, AFICS-Cyprus had 79 active members. Of these, 64 had paid their dues for 2016, with five members taking up a life membership. 15 members had not yet paid for the year.

On the same date, the reserves of the Association amounted to a total of €9,504,59 with €9,380,09 in the Hellenic Bank account and €124,50 in cash.

## AFICS-Cyprus Executive Committee Members

President/Secretary: Mr Yangos Antoniadis  
Deputy President/Events Coordinator: Dr Michael Voniatis  
Treasurer: Ms Ero Kimonis  
Webmaster: Mr Gianfranco Longo  
Newsletter Editor: Ms Miriam Pericleous  
Member: Ms Fredy Galatopoulos

## Second Visit to Famagusta



By special request, a second visit to Famagusta was organised, this time on 23 April 2016. Five AFICS members joined an excursion organised by Ms. Rita Severis of the CVAR (Cyprus Visual Arts Research) Centre, which included visits to the Othello Tower (recently restored by EU funding and the technical expertise of the UN Development Programme), the Venetian Walls, the church of St. Peter and Paul, St. Nikolas Cathedral and the Lusignan Palace.

Following the visit, the AFICS members joined the other participants for lunch at a typical Turkish Cypriot tavern and then went for a long walk along the Famagusta beach.

*Left: Mike McNally and Yangos Antoniadis under the oldest tree in Cyprus, planted when the Lusignans began building Saint Nicolas Cathedral in 1298*

## Lefkosia – Nicosia: Capital of Cyprus

The Centre of Cultural Heritage in old Nicosia was the venue for a lecture, given on 12 April 2016 by the Director, Dr. Sofocles Sofocleous (seen right), a professor of history, archaeology and cultural heritage. Fourteen AFICS members with their guests attended.

Dr. Sofocleous briefly touched on the troubled past of this island, located at the crossroads of the Eastern Mediterranean, which has played a dominant role in the architectural history of Cyprus. The lecture focused on Lefkosia (Nicosia), the capital of Cyprus, and outlined some of the most impressive monuments contained within the Venetian Walls, located in the centre of the capital and built by the Venetian Authorities in the 1560s.

At the end of the lecture, Dr. Sofocleous, accompanied by participants, enjoyed an excellent lunch at a nearby restaurant ("*Shandris*"), well-known for its delicious traditional Cypriot specialities.



## THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CYPRUS – THE NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT OF KHIROKITIA



**We begin our visits to key historic sites in Cyprus with Khirokitia.** Nine thousand years ago, this Stone Age village, located on the slope of a hill in the valley of the Maroni River near the southern coast of the island, was a thriving settlement. One of some 20 aceramic Neolithic sites on this island, it was discovered in 1934 and is now recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Khirokitia has revealed a great deal about the people who once lived there. This is the earliest known culture in Cyprus, and was a developed, well-organised society. The village, enclosed by a stone wall, was built up of small, flat-roofed, circular houses, the size of one to two spaces in a car park. This would have been enough for two to three people, and it is thought the village could have been home for between 300 to 600 people.

Local materials were used such as limestone, river stones, pise or mud-brick. Roofs were probably flat wooden frames lined with plants, probably reeds, covered with layers of pise and earth. Inside the houses, known as "tholos", walls were coated with whitish plaster. A few houses had windows, some still showing the remnants of red ochre wall paintings, and there is evidence of poles to suggest a second floor.

With weather similar to today, villagers cultivated wheat and barley, harvested using tools made out of flint sickles hafted in wood or bone. They also collected fruit from wild trees including pistachios, figs, olives and plums. Meat came from deer, sheep, goats and pigs and wool was used to weave clothes.

Men were an average height of 1.60 m with women slightly

shorter. Infant mortality was high, and the average death rate was between 25 and 40.

No religious shrines have been identified, however burial customs are well-known. The dead were typically buried in a foetal position under the floors of the houses, women usually with jewellery and men with a stone placed over the deceased, possibly to prevent the spirit from returning to haunt the living.

Civilisation in Khirokitia came to a sudden mysterious end. 1,500 years later, a new – this time ceramic – culture appeared. Today, archaeologists have recreated several buildings and part of the stone wall near the Maroni River to show what the houses would have looked like (see below).

As you climb the stony path up the hillside, you might just be able to picture the village inhabited by Neolithic men and women who lived there, 7,000 years B.C.

MP



*Newsletter readers may recall that the first socio-cultural event of AFICS-Cyprus was a visit to Khirokitia on 5 November 2013.*