



**MedSTACH Centre of Excellence
Eastern Mediterranean Science and Technology
Centre of Excellence for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage**

**The MedSTACH Project Kick Off Meeting
Nicosia, 5 September 2017**

Another milestone in Cyprus's course towards international recognition as a science and technology excellence hub was recently reached with the kick-off meeting of the European project: **Eastern Mediterranean Science and Technology Centre of Excellence for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage – MedSTACH**. The project seeks to design a new Centre of Excellence in Cyprus for the study and promotion of cultural heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean region, capitalising on recent developments in relevant sciences, engineering and technology.

The kick-off meeting of project **MedSTACH** was organised by the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, and took place at the "Kastelliotissa" Medieval Hall, in Nicosia, Cyprus, on September 5th, 2017. The welcome speech was given by the Director of the Department of Antiquities Dr. M. Solomidou-Ieronymidou, while opening addresses were given by: the Director of the Directorate for Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning of the Directorate of General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development, Mrs. I. Kleanthous, the Scientific Officer of the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation, Mrs. K. Makri, the Minister of Transport, Communications and Works, Mr. M. Demetriades, the Rector of the Cyprus University of Technology, Prof. A. Anayiotos, the Rector of the University of Cyprus, Prof. A. Christofidis and the Deputy Director of the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, Mr. M. Menelaou. An overview of project **MedSTACH** was subsequently presented by its coordinator, Prof. Ph. Kyriakidis, followed by presentations by consortium member representatives illustrating their contribution to the project. The meeting was attended by members of the academic, research, government, and diplomatic communities, as well as by individuals with activities and interests spanning the broader cultural heritage sector.

In their opening addresses, both the Rector of the Cyprus University of Technology, Prof. Andreas Anayiotos, and the Rector of the University of Cyprus, Prof. Constantinos Christofides, stressed the significance of project **MedSTACH**, as well as the operational readiness of both public universities to work towards the success of the project. Likewise, the Minister of Transport, Communications and Works, Mr. Marios Demetriades, underlined in his opening address that: "The Centre's mission is to foster the necessary scientific and technological

environment for: (a) conducting cutting-edge research in the fields of exploration, analysis and interpretation, protection, promotion, and valorisation of the unique cultural heritage of Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean, and (b) strengthening the contribution of that heritage to tourism -- one of the basic priority sectors of sustainable growth -- through modern and emerging technologies”.

The **MedSTACH** consortium is coordinated by the **Department of Civil Engineering and Geomatics of the Cyprus University of Technology**, and includes as partners the **Archaeological Research Unit** of the University of Cyprus, the **Department of Antiquities of Cyprus**, and the **Cyprus Tourism Organisation**. The consortium also includes leading international institutions as key external partners, namely, the Laboratory of Geophysical-Satellite Remote Sensing and Archaeo-Environment of the **Institute for Mediterranean Studies of the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas (FORTH)**, and the **Institute of Archaeology of the University College London (UCL)**.

Project **MedSTACH** was awarded €400.000 for a period of one year from Programme “Teaming for Excellence” Phase 1, part of European Union’s Horizon 2020 framework for Research and Innovation, while ranked 1st (attaining full marks 15/15, “Excellent”) on a pan-European scale, among 208 proposals submitted to that Programme. The Centre of Excellence that will be designed by project **MedSTACH** will seek competitive funding of 15 million euros for a period of 5-7 years, with the possibility of an additional equal amount of national co-funding for a period of 15 years. As the Centre’s mission is in line with the Smart Specialization Strategy for Cyprus, it is expected that the Centre will facilitate the creation of new and specialised job opportunities, thus promoting sustainable development both at local and regional levels.

For more information about **MedSTACH**, visit the project’s website at: www.medstach.eu

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Picture from the kick-off meeting of the **MedSTACH** project at the Medieval Hall 'Kasteliotissa', Nicosia (05.09.2017).



Picture after the end of the **MedSTACH** kick-off meeting at the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus, (05.09.2017).