



NetMAR

Network for Medieval Arts & Rituals

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First NetMAR Stakeholders Workshop at the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation 'Creative Tourism and Medieval Arts and Rituals in Cyprus'

The Network for Medieval Arts and Rituals, a Horizon 2020 project funded by the European Union and bringing together the Centre for Medieval Arts & Rituals of the University of Cyprus (host institution) and the Centre for Medieval Literature of the University of Southern Denmark and the Centre for Medieval Studies of the University of Bamberg, organised in Nicosia on the morning of Wednesday 26 January its first Stakeholder Workshop.

The workshop ran under the theme 'Creative Tourism and Medieval Arts and Rituals in Cyprus' and brought together different stakeholders – academics, cultural managers, musicians, festival organisers, archaeologists, and those in creative tourism – under one roof to share experiences and best practices, air concerns and challenges, and network and harvest ideas about possible collaborations. All those present expressed their delight in being able to exchange insights and ideas in an informal and friendly environment.

The day started with a short welcome and presentation of the aims and objectives of the project NetMAR by Dr Stavroula Constantinou, the Project Coordinator. One of the key aims of NetMAR is to bridge the all too visible and felt gap between academia and the industry and services sector. NetMAR, Constantinou stressed, is as interested in studying the medieval heritage of Cyprus as to preserving it, promoting it, and mobilising it in diverse and innovative ways.

The keynote speaker of the workshop was Caroline Couret, Director of the CreativeTourismNetwork® based in Barcelona, Spain. Couret led a discussion on 'Creative Tourism as a New Way to Experience Heritage', showcasing the fundamental principles of creative tourism, which promotes tourism linked to the local culture of a place and promotes active participation in creative activities, linked to a place's heritage and identity.

'Such synergies between the academic sector and the tourist industries are key to guaranteeing the development of a sustainable tourism that is, at the same time, attractive for the new travelers, and respectful of the historical heritage', Couret said.

A panel of people working in Cyprus in key cultural management and creative tourism positions then gave brief presentations as part of a roundtable of experts. Aggelos Smagas, Religious Tourism Coordinator at the City of Famagusta spoke about the exciting work being done to promote religious tourism in Famagusta. Christiana Papadopoulou, Director of the Ayii Omologites (Nicosia) Cultural Centre, gave an overview of the various educational and cultural activities being done by the Ayii Omologites (Nicosia) Cultural Centre to promote and preserve the unique history of Nicosia, and spoke candidly about the challenges faced by the Centre and by educators. Yiannis Miralis, Associate Professor, Music Education, European University Cyprus, spoke about his work in cataloguing and preserving traditional Cypriot music and about the need to do more to promote this rich cultural heritage, while Nikolas Vrionis presented the actions and visions of the Municipality of Ypsonas in promoting heritage.

A lively discussion followed, with all participants expressing their eagerness to carry on the conversation. NetMAR will be organising further stakeholder workshops. To keep abreast with NetMAR's many different activities, please visit netmar.cy





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