

2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN & MIDDLE EAST”

October 13-14, 2021

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The 2nd International Conference “Climate Change in the Eastern Mediterranean & Middle East” (<https://climatechange2021.org/>) will be held on the 13th and 14th of October 2021, in a hybrid format, online and in Cyprus. The Conference will be preceded by a series of scientific workshops, held on the 11th and 12th of October 2021, at the premises of the Cyprus Institute in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The Conference is organized in the framework of the Cyprus Government Initiative for Coordinating Climate Change Actions in the Eastern Mediterranean & Middle East (EMME region). During the event, 65 eminent policymakers and scientists from all over the world will review the manifestations of the climate crisis in the EMME region and discuss the priorities and the main elements of a Strategic Plan for Climate Change mitigation and adaptation. Basis for the discussion will be provided by the results that emerged from the first phase of the Initiative, a set of comprehensive scientific and techno-economic studies leading to policy recommendations for consideration by the Governments of the region. Over the last two years, the studies were put together through the contributions of more than 220 experts primarily from the EMME region, were organized into 13 scientific Task Forces and coordinated by the Cyprus Institute.

Although the focus of the Conference is regional, its intended impacts regarding climate action are of global significance. The EMME region has been recognized as a global “climate change hotspot” with particularly high vulnerability to climate change impacts and is already facing extreme weather events and other adverse effects. At the same time its per capita contribution to both Greenhouse Gas Emissions and fossil fuel extraction is higher than the global average. These are only going to intensify in the coming decades without proper mitigation and adaptation actions, and could soon lead to intolerable environmental conditions, ultimately forcing mass migration for the region’s population of c. 500 million, with catastrophic implications for the EMME and the planet.

The Conference precedes a Ministerial meeting to be organized by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus in the spring of 2022. The Ministerial meeting will serve as a forum for discussing and negotiating the development of a Regional Action Plan for cooperation on climate change mitigation and adaptation based on the conclusions of the Conference. The Ministerial meeting will pave the way to an EMME Leaders’ Summit, planned for the Fall of 2022, which aims at the creation of a ten-year Regional Action Plan for mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis.

The Conference is organized by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, The Cyprus Institute, the European Commission Representation in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean & Middle East Climate and Atmosphere Research Center (EMME-CARE) with the support of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Cyprus.

THE CONFERENCE WILL BE ADDRESSED BY:

- H.E. Mr. **Nicos Anastasiades**, President of the Republic of Cyprus,
- H.E. Dr. **Laurent Fabius**, President of the French Constitutional Council, Former Prime Minister of France
- Mr. **Virginijus Sinkevičius**, EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries
- H.R.H. **Prince El Hassan bin Talal** of Jordan
- Prof. **Jeffrey Sachs**, President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

OTHER PROMINENT SPEAKERS:

- Prof. **Petteri Taalas**, Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization
- Dr. Michel Jarraud, Secretary General Emeritus of World Meteorological Organization
- H.E. Dr. **Mohamad Abdel Aty**, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt
- H.E. Mr. **Gideon Behar**, Ambassador, Special Envoy for Climate Change and Sustainability, Israel
- Dr. **Rabia Ferroukhi**, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)
- Dr. **Shaddad Attili**, Minister at the PLO Negotiations Affair and Former Water Minister
- Dr. **Kamal Araj**, Jordanian Atomic Energy Commission, Jordan
- Mr. **Abdalah Mokssit**, Secretary of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- Dr. **Jauad El Kharraz**, Executive Director, Regional Centre for Renewable Energy
- Dr. **Hassan Janabi**, Former Minister of Water Resources in Iraq
- Dr. **Taleb Rifai**, Former Secretary General United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- Dr. **Khaled Toukan**, Former Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Director of SESAME, Jordan
- H.E. Mr. **Miguel Angel Moratinos**, The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
- Ms. **Janet Rogan**, COP26 regional Ambassador, Middle East and Africa, UK
- Prof. **Jos Lelieveld**, Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, Germany
- H.E. Mr. **Nikos Christodoulides**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cyprus
- H.E. Dr. **Costas Kadis**, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Cyprus
- H.E. Mr. **Kyriacos Kokkinos**, Deputy Minister for Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, Cyprus
- H.E. Dr. **Lina Mendoni**, Minister of Culture and Sports, Greece
- H.E. Mr. **Christos Stylianides**, Minister of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection, Greece
- Mr. **George Kremlis**, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Energy, Climate, Environment and Circular Economy, Greece
- Prof. **Hany Helal**, Former Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Egypt

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN & MIDDLE EAST CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE OF THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT

The Cyprus Government Initiative for Coordinating Climate Change Actions in the Eastern Mediterranean & Middle East (EMME region) was launched by H.E. President Mr. Nicos Anastasiades in March 2019. The announcement came following the 1st International Conference on Climate Change in the EMME, organized by The Cyprus Institute in 2018, which called on the governments of the region to take immediate action to address climate change.

Utilizing Cyprus' excellent relations with the countries of the region, the Presidential initiative has a dual goal, namely to initiate or enhance:

- 1. EMME-focused Research, Technology, Innovation, Observation and Monitoring** by regional and international scientific institutions towards: a) a detailed understanding and accurate forecasting of regional climate change impacts b) the development of a science-based policy toolkit for the amelioration of the impacts of such phenomena and the identification and design of the appropriate per sector and application area (e.g. sub-regional, urban, etc.) adaptation and mitigation measures.
- 2. EMME-specific Policies** in coordination with transnational and multinational stakeholders (European, Arab and non-European, EU and UN) and organizations (WMO, FAO, WHO) to address the overall impacts of climate change aiming to: a) to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement and National Plans, b) to adopt specific action programs for different sectors related to the economy and society, and c) to investigate specific techno-economic scenarios to mitigate climate change effects in the EMME countries. An indispensable component is the identification of the necessary resources for the implementation of such a program.

To achieve the above objectives a detailed plan to produce a series of scientific, policy and techno-economic studies, which will feed ministerial meetings leading subsequently to a summit meeting of the EMME countries has been developed. The intergovernmental component of this work is coordinated by the Cyprus Government, while the scientific component is coordinated by The Cyprus Institute.

THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE

The Cyprus Institute (cyi.ac.cy) is an international science, technology and educational organization, based in Cyprus. Its overarching mission is to strengthen the research community and culture of Cyprus and help transform its economy into a knowledge-based one, as well as to create a research and innovation hub for the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. Recognizing the unique geopolitical location of Cyprus, The Cyprus Institute aspires to advance regional cooperation, and in this way contribute to addressing issues of regional relevance and global significance, of which the climate crisis is a critical one.

As part of its long-standing commitment in these areas, The Cyprus Institute is honored to be coordinating the scientific component of the Cyprus Government Initiative for Coordinating Climate Action in the EMME, aimed at the creation of a Regional Action Plan to help meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. Beyond its role in the Initiative, The Cyprus Institute also supports the Government with emissions monitoring, and educates aspiring scientists through its graduate programs. As a member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the Cyprus Institute actively promotes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its regional impact is further enhanced through the activities of the Climate and Atmosphere Research Center (CARE-C), a research & innovation Center of Excellence established at The Cyprus Institute, and focused on addressing the risks associated with air pollution and climate change in the EMME region.