

## OBJECTIVE 03

To support reconciliation, dialogue, closer relationship and trust between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities

# ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUALISM IN CYPRUS

Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus



Photo Credit: Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus



## THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Enhance intercommunal dialogue through the promotion of bilingualism in Cyprus

A short video promoting bilingualism and peace in Cyprus.

A panel discussion on language policies in Cyprus with the participation of academicians from both communities

An online panel discussion entitled "Foreign language teaching a didactic approach based on the principles of learning, teaching and assessing of the Common European Framework (CEF) of reference for languages" for Greek and Turkish instructors on 5 September 2020.

## ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUALISM CYPRUS

The Association aims to promote and advocate for bilingualism in Cyprus. The association intends to create favorable conditions for learning the two official languages in Cyprus, Greek and Turkish, in both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. The association conducts Greek and Turkish translation workshops, bilingual language courses for kids and adult learners at different levels, bilingual and bicomunal cultural trips and outdoor activities.



## STORY OF THE ACTION

The association targets to bring people from both communities in Cyprus together through language, a key tool for peace building. It aims to promote and encourage learning of Turkish and Greek languages in both communities to create dialogue and a better understanding between the two communities.

*"Our motivation focuses on peace building by bringing people from both communities together. We believe that language learning is a very important tool. From this point of view, as bilingual activists, teachers and translators (from both communities) we decided to establish the Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus."*

Dr. Düriye Gökçebağ

*"Academic speakers informed the audience about language policies regarding teaching Greek and Turkish [as secondary language] in both communities, resulting in increased awareness. One of the invited academic speakers, Dr. Niyazi Kızılyürek, a Member of the European Parliament, has already raised the issue at the European Parliament. The common message of the speakers was that 'we should immediately adopt a bilingual education system in both communities'. This should follow the common European reference framework for language learning teaching."*

Dr. Düriye Gökçebağ

The association organised an online discussion on the common European language teaching framework. The latter was initially planned as a bi-communal event to be held in person. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was held online and was attended by Greek and Turkish language teachers.



Photo Credit: Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus

The action first produced a short video featuring local people from Turkish Cypriot, Armenian, Latin, Maronite and Greek Cypriot communities, speaking Greek and Turkish. The video was widely disseminated to promote bilingualism and peace on the island.

*"Through this short video, we tried to break the language barrier by encouraging people to learn a new language to express themselves better and contribute to the peace building process on the island. The video dissemination on social media was very successful and reached out more than 60000 people. Following this video, the number of our members and participants in our bicomunal cultural events increased. More and more people met with new people from the other community and started learning Turkish and Greek respectively."*

Dr. Düriye Gökçebağ

The association further hosted a first-of-its-kind panel discussion on language policies, which brought together academics and members of the public from both communities around the idea of incorporating each other's language in their respective education systems in the long term.

This action is a follow-up to the association's first Grow Civic supported action. It created its visual identity, outreached its target groups, improved children's language skills and strengthened the professional capacities of translators from both communities. In this second action, the association aimed to expand its activities by encouraging the development and adoption of policies on bilingual education in Greek and Turkish across the island.

## RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

By highlighting the importance of bilingual education in peace building, the action built the capacities and awareness of duty bearers (civil society organisations, public, educators, academia, media, politicians, educational authorities, local communities, etc.) while also reminding them their responsibilities in ensuring proper bilingual education.



Photo Credit: Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The association is committed to continuing its efforts to promote dialogue, reconciliation and peace in Cyprus through activities like, bicomunal events, language classes for kids and adults, bilingual public discussions and outdoor events.

TO FIND  
MORE ABOUT  
THE ACTION



[www.bilingualismcyprus.com](http://www.bilingualismcyprus.com)



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