

Social Mediation and the strengthening of Rule of Law in Cyprus (SOMEROL) Closing Conference - Call for Contributions

The University of Central Lancashire Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus), the Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Centre (CPDC) and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Law, Alternative and Innovative Methods (ICLAIM) are inviting all interested parties to submit contributions to the closing conference of the 'Social Mediation and the strengthening of Rule of Law in Cyprus' project (SOMEROL).

We hereby invite researchers, policy makers, civil society representatives and educators to submit their proposal for contributions to the final conference organised under the SOMEROL project. Contributions need not necessarily be in the form of an academic paper, but can include a PowerPoint presentation on a civil society project, a video, a performance, a poetry reading and so on. Indicative topics include the following **non-exhaustive** list:

Social Mediation and the Rule of Law: recommendations for policy
Applying Social Mediation in Cyprus: next steps
Strengthening the Rule of Law: suggestions for Cyprus
Strengthening peace efforts in Cyprus through informal initiatives
The Cyprus Issue: new ways forward

The event will take place as follows:

Date: Thursday, 27 April 2023 (afternoon) – Friday, 28 April 2023 (full day)

Venue: UCLan Cyprus, Pyla, Larnaca

Based on the contributions received, the conference will combine various activities, including public debates, roundtable discussions, and traditional panel presentations, including with high profile experts. If you are interested to submit a contribution please describe your idea in **200 words**, and forward your submission along with a **100 biographical note** of each presenter, to lawacademy@uclancyprus.ac.cy by **Wednesday, 12 April 2023 at 17:00** (Cyprus time).

The SOMEROL Project & Social Mediation: An overview

The project builds on previous **Social Mediation projects**, that have taken place in Cyprus and abroad from 2018 to 2022. The aim has been the delivery of training workshops on Social Mediation, with a particular focus on strengthening the Rule of Law in Cyprus, on either side of the UN-administered Buffer Zone. The project employed previous findings, especially in regard to divided societies, which raise challenging theoretical and practical questions in terms of conflict prevention, management and resolution. In addition, by turning the focus on the Rule of Law principle, the latest activities which took place in January and February 2023 aimed at discussing issues of transparency, corruption, media-freedom and counter-information, as relevant, from policy, industry, civil society and educational perspectives, in an inter-communal context.

Social mediation is a recognised informal dispute resolution tool during social conflicts, and its potential to bridge differences and strengthen social cohesion has been long recognised. In the context of the strengthening of the Rule of Law, however, the position and benefits of informal methods are often constrained and even overshadowed by the dominance of formal infrastructures. In that regard, the aim of the present conference is to identify ways in which this challenge may be overcome in the Cypriot context, **taking into account** the long-term division of the island, and the resulting weakened institutional infrastructure, which poses a constant threat to securing the protection of the Rule of Law.

¹ Social Mediation Manual on Culture in Divided Societies (ICLAIM, 2022), available to download here: <https://social-mediation.org/resources/>, p.15.

For any further information do not hesitate to contact the organisers at social-mediation@icclaimcentre.org.

