

Catherine DAY, Secretary General of the European Commission

cc.: [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Request from the European Commission of 18 February 2015, Ref. Ares (2015)692413, concerning post-office activities planned by former Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou.

The Committee has examined the Commission's request for an opinion on post-mandate activities Ms Vassiliou's wishes to pursue. In this Opinion, the Committee pronounces itself on invitations extended to Ms Vassiliou to become [REDACTED] and a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Cyprus Institute (Cyl) and the Cyprus Research and Educational Foundation (CREF).

The Committee takes note of the information provided by Ms Vassiliou in her notification of 9 February 2015 and by the Commission itself.

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**2. Board of Trustees of the Cyprus Institute (Cyl) and the Cyprus Research and Educational Foundation (CREF)**

- a. According to its web site, the Cyprus Institute (Cyl) “operates under the aegis of the Cyprus Research and Educational Foundation (CREF), which is governed by a Board of Trustees comprising leading personalities of the international academic, political and business worlds. The principal objectives of CREF are the advancement of knowledge and its humane and benevolent application and the establishment of a new research and educational public-benefit organization that shall generally promote research and education in Cyprus and abroad and aim primarily at benefitting the public interest at large”.
- b. Among its objectives and achievements, the Cyprus Institute lists “strong collaborations with academic research organizations and strong links with industry internationally”, “three licensed and accredited doctoral programs (by the Ministry of Education and Culture)”, “outreach programs for education and community relations, focusing on the specific needs of Cyprus and the region”, “engaging more than 130 scientists and professionals from around the world (...) with “faculty and researchers over 80% of the total staff” including “mainly EU nationals (over 10 different EU nationalities), but also nationals from other countries such as the United States, Russia and Egypt”.
- c. The Committee notes that Ms Vassiliou’s intended activity would not be remunerated. Although showing a link with the education dimension of Ms Vassiliou’s former portfolio, the not for profit activities of the Cyprus Institute seem to be much wider, serve the public interest and support EU objectives in the field of research development at many levels, including reinforced cooperation with industry. The EU recognizes these efforts through FP7 funding selection (according to the Institute’s web site).
- d. In view of the wider scope of the Cyprus Institute, its not for profit objectives in the public interest and the absence of remuneration for Ms Vassiliou’s intended activity, the Committee sees no incompatibility with her former Commission mandate. Ms Vassiliou should, however, abstain from any activity, in particular lobbying, in case

the Cyprus Institute should wish to benefit from EU funding in all areas related to education and research.

**Opinion:**

The Ad-Hoc Ethical Committee is of the opinion that Ms Vassiliou's acceptance of the invitation to become Member of the Board of Trustees of the Cyprus Institute (Cyl) and the Cyprus Research and Educational Foundation (CREF) is compatible with the second paragraph of Article 245 of the TFEU.

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Date: 27 February 2015