

**WELCOMING ADDRESS BY DR EVI SOTERIOU, DIRECTOR OF THE HIGHER
HOTEL INSTITUTE CYPRUS (HHIC) AT THE EVENT “GASTRONOMY UNITES”
HHIC 30.11.2017**

Your Excellency the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic

Honorable Consul of Thailand

Honorable Members of the diplomatic corps of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China

Honorable Mayor, Vice-Mayor and Municipal Counselors of Aglantzia

Distinguished guests

Dear partners and colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you today to the Higher Hotel Institute Cyprus (HHIC) and our Student Training Restaurant for this special event co-organized with the municipality of Aglantzia in the framework of the integration programme by local authorities, with the very intriguing name “Colourful Societies”.

The event is titled “Gastronomy Unites” and aims to showcase how the international and very eloquent language of gastronomy can act as a medium of cultural expression, sharing and friendship between countries as well as the different nationals comprising the multicultural and colourful societies of today. Getting to know the culture and gastronomy of our co-citizens can contribute decisively in furthering our knowledge, understanding and respect for each other in an increasingly globalized world.

When we were asked by the dear friend Mayor of Aglantzia, Mr. Charalambos Petrides, to co-organize this event, we did not have to think about it twice. The promotion of the very noble ideas of multiculturalism and social cohesion need to be regarded as key educational objectives by tertiary educational institutions such as HHIC, which should operate as open systems and in-tune with the demands of the modern societies we aim to serve. Additionally, gastronomy is an area in which we historically invest at this institute. An event which pays tribute to the gastronomy of third country nationals residing in Cyprus is very much in line with our mission, very close to our hearts and an amazing educational experience for our students.

HHIC, one of the most historical institutes of tertiary education in Cyprus, with a history spanning over half a century, was the first tertiary educational institution to offer a programme of study in culinary arts in this country. We pride to have the majority of chefs working, creating and excelling in Cyprus and abroad as our graduates, whilst

over the course of its history, this institute trained numerous foreign nationals who attended our programmes as overseas students or trainees.

We therefore know well at HHIC the decisive impact that cross-cultural contact and exchange can have on the gastronomy of the various countries around the globe as well as the great power of gastronomy to bring together and unite different cultures and people. The Cypriot culture and gastronomy is one very good example of how the cultural exchange between different civilizations and people can get integrated and magically merge to formulate a country's own cultural and gastronomic identity.

Due to its strategic geographical position at the crossroads of three continents, our small island country has been open to the influences of many important civilizations over its long and turbulent history, which left their indelible mark on what is known today as the Cypriot culture and gastronomy. The Middle East and Asia are very keen to us gastronomically and through this event we will try to showcase it.

HHIC students were responsible for the organization of this event, from design and decoration to the preparation and service of the meal, even the little handmade presents placed in front of you. The organization of this event is yet another challenge we asked them to undertake in the framework of their programmes of study and we hope that you will enjoy the outcome of their creativity and effort, under the valuable guidance and supervision of their instructors.

With this opportunity please allow me to express our deepest gratitude to the Mayor of Aglantzia and his team at the municipality for the constant trust vested in our institute and educational work as well as the excellent and most fruitful cooperation we have established.

A big thank you and well done to my colleagues here at the institute and our students who worked in an inspired and dedicated manner for the realization of today's event.

Last but not least we would like to thank all of you for joining us today and wish that you enjoy your time with us and the gastronomic creations of our students. Good appetite-
Καλή όρεξη!