

- Dear President Nicos Anastasiades, dear Averof,
 - dear Lefteris (Christoforou), dear Loucas (Fourlas)
 - dear Ministers, honourable guests,
 - dear friends,
- I am deeply shocked and saddened by the passing of Minister Zeta Emilianidou. I want to express to all of you, my dear friends, my condolences for the loss of your colleague and friend. The EPP family is with you in thoughts and prayers in this difficult moment.
- Clouded by these sad news, I am nevertheless happy to be with you in Nicosia today. It is a great pleasure for me to come to Cyprus. The bond between Cyprus and Europe is strong and steeped in history. Cyprus with its rich and diverse cultural, historical and archaeological heritage, fundamentally rooted in classical Hellenism. Cyprus as a strong and passionate advocate of Europe's cultural heritage.
- Cyprus is an integral part of Europe. Strategically situated, Cyprus is Europe's southern outpost in the Mediterranean and Europe's natural stepping-stone, "our door", to the Middle East. Cyprus joining EU on 1 May 2004 was a big day for the EU and Cyprus. It was a natural choice, as Cyprus and Europe are inseparably united by their culture, civilisation, history and adherence to ideals of democracy, freedom and justice.
- It is good to be among friends. Dear Nicos, dear Averof, I could always count on your support. Thank you for your incredible hospitality. This is one of my first trips as EPP party president. It is symbolic to pay tribute to Cyprus, to DISY and personally, to you, dear Nicos and Averof, and your remarkable work. When you took over nine years ago after years of economic mismanagement by the Left, Cyprus was on the brink of collapse heading for bankruptcy. **You turned Cyprus into a European model of prosperity, an example for the rest of Europe.**

- **And let me say from the outset, dear Averof: in February 2023, we need your leadership and experience to continue on this path of reforms and prosperity!**
- This congress happens in critical times. In Europe, there is war again. As Cypriots you know first-hand, what it means to be attacked, what it feels to live with the open wound of a divided country.
- Putin wants to destroy all that Europe stands for: democracy, freedom and peace. Who else, if not us, Europeans, can defend our values? It is for our values Ukrainians are fighting for: they dream of living the European way of life! Thank you to all Ukrainians for your courage, your unbent spirit of freedom and democracy, and your ambition for Europe. We stand beside you!
- President Zelenskyi in the European Parliament asked us directly: are we welcome? Can we become members of the club? Is it worth to fight for this goal of joining the EU? And to these sincere questions, the EPP says whole heartedly: YES! You are welcome. YES! You can become member of the European Union. **YES! The EPP fully supports the candidate status for Ukraine and also for the Republic of Moldova.**
- We also need a clear timeline for the Western Balkans. They need concrete steps, where they feel there are welcomed. The Western Balkans are Europe and they need a clear European future! At the same time, it must be clear that the EU has geopolitical-cultural boundaries. **Therefore, Turkey cannot become EU member. But we want a reunited Cyprus in our united Europe.**
- To make enlargement possible – we have to change, to improve Europe. We have to make Europe fit for challenges of our times. It can't be that one single man like Orban can block the entire European Union. For example: A Europe that can't decide on a united foreign policy, even on sanctions, will be a weak Europe in the world. **Europe has to speak with one strong voice.**

- And we must reject that Erdogan is playing with us. It is great news that Sweden and Finland have applied for NATO. EPP was always in favor. In the same time, Erdogans blockade is completely unacceptable. We must be tough in countering his attempts to blackmail us. We will not let Erdogan dictate who can be part of the club and who cannot. **NATO is there to protect Western values, not Erdogan`s ego.**
- Ukraine has been a wake-up call. At the same time, we must not forget about the Mediterranean and the Cyprus issue in particular. We stand united behind Cyprus and expect Turkey to respect the sovereignty of Cyprus. The two-state solution proposed by the Turkish side is unacceptable. Our position on the Cyprus issue has always been crystal clear: **Cyprus issues are European issues. There can never be a united Europe with a divided Cyprus.**
- Thank you, dear Nicos, for your strong determination and commitment to the vision of ending Turkish occupation and reunifying Cyprus. Thank you for your will to **set the negotiations back on track and for your brave Confidence Building Measures.**
- **We need solutions** based on EU and international law. Europe must safeguard and keep its neighborhood in order. We have to even further and stronger integrate as European Union to show that we are united in our neighbourhood. Cyprus, you can count on us.
- Serious political times, are EPP times. Critical political times is not a time for showing off but a time for responsibility, credibility, determination and the best ideas for the future. **Serious political times are Democratic Rally times!**
- The very successful government of Nicos Anastasiades, supported by the Democratic Rally, is the best proof of that. You are a lighthouse showing that good politics matters: that it is not about being focused to be the darling of the day, but to be the architect for the future!
- In the past nine years, Cyprus went from a country on brink of collapse suffering from mistakes of past governments, to a **European model of**

prosperity and stability. President Anastasiades and his government had a tough job during the financial crisis, but impressively managed to put Cyprus back on track. They have regained the country's financial credibility and brought remarkable economic recovery and growth to the country - **with discipline, hard work and responsible financial management.**

- The brave but difficult decisions of the government with the support of DISY in the national parliament did pay off: DISY implemented the necessary reforms. You fought for real fairness: You reduced unemployment. In 2019, you introduced a new National Healthcare System, for the first time in Cyprus' history. Thanks to you, every Cypriot has now equally access to affordable and effective medical care. DISY created wealth. DISY guaranteed Cyprus has been respected in Europe! Thank you dear president, thank you Averof! **Cyprus and Europe owe you a lot. Cyprus needs DISY!**
- And Cyprus needs good leadership. With **Averof Neofytou as your presidential candidate for 2023**, you have an excellent and committed political leader, a convicted European, tirelessly and passionately fighting for Cyprus
- I trust that the Cypriots will place their faith in Averof Neofytou. So that he can continue the successful path of prosperity and stability for Cyprus. So that he can continue writing the modern success story and realise his vision of a "green and tech island". A goal that could also be realised by means of the Next Generation EU fund promoting the transition towards a more green and digitalized European society.
- I wish the very best of luck to the Democratic Rally and to you, my dear friend Averof. **A vote for DISY is a vote for a stable, secure, prosperous and modern Cyprus.**
- The elections are crucial also for Europe. We face a time, where centre-right leadership is more important than ever. We as Centre-right, we unite, we are bridge builders. That's why we call ourselves the People's Party. We bring the people together from:

- big cities and the country side
 - young and old
 - cosmopolitans and natives
 - workers and entrepreneurs
 - farmers and digital startups and
 - the east and west, the north and the south!
- Together we are fighting for solutions; not for ideologies. Our role models are not celebrities. Our role models are the SME entrepreneurs, the nurses, the workers, the shop owners, who stand up and work every day. They are our everyday heroes! They deserve a bright future. It is for them that we work!
 - As DISY, you have always supported our EPP family: you have always promoted our values and been a strong and reliable voice for our EPP family here in Cyprus. Thanks to Nicos Anastasiades, Averof Neofytou, Lefteris Christoforou and Loucas Furlas. **DISY is not only the driving force for a strong Cyprus but also for a stable, competitive and forward-looking Europe!**

Dear all,

- Europe is under attack. We are facing challenging times ahead. The Centre-right is now needed more than ever. Experience, values, responsibility, and a future orientation – that is our DNA! We need a strong Europe. We need a strong Cyprus. And we need a strong and future orientated leader: **We need Averof Neofytou! Your friends of the entire EPP family are with you. Dear friends, you will do it again in 2023!**