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PRESS RELEASE

The EXCELSIOR Project Phase I was launched during a two-day kickoff event that was organized in the premises of the Cyprus University of Technology, in Limassol. During 7-8 September 2017, this Horizon 2020 project started officially, setting up the framework for a one-year close collaboration between the **Cyprus University of Technology**, acting as the coordinator, the **German Aerospace Centre (DLR)**, the **National Observatory of Athens (NOA)**, the **German Leibniz Institute for Tropospheric Research (TROPOS)** and the **Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works (MTCW)** of the Republic of Cyprus, through its **Department of Electronic Communications (DEC)**. In the first day of the kickoff meeting, representatives from all partners discussed in detail and agreed on the technicalities of a plan to reach effectively the target of the project which is to develop a business plan for promoting further the existing ERATOSTHENES Research Centre of the Cyprus University of Technology into a Centre of Excellence.

The second day of the meeting was an open event in which public authorities and institutions, private enterprises and the public were invited to participate. This event was under the auspices of the Honorable Minister of Transport, Communications and Works, Mr Marios Demetriades who has addressed the kickoff meeting. In his speech, the Minister stressed the commitment of Cyprus to be part of the space development and to benefit from the space systems and that his Ministry strongly supports the Excelsior Project by any means. The event was also addressed by Prof. Andreas Anayiotos, Rector of the Cyprus University of Technology, followed by Mr Nicos Nicolaides, the Mayor of Limassol, who expressed his enthusiastic support to EXCELSIOR and the Municipality's anticipation that the project will assist in resolving important issues in areas of particular interest such as maritime activities, cultural heritage and tourism. In his opening speech, Prof. Diofantos Hadjimitsis, who is the project coordinator, welcomed the participants and outlined the project's scope which is clearly identified in its full title: **ERATOSTHENES: EXcellence Research Centre for Earth SurveiLLance and Space-Based MonItoring Of the EnviRonment**.



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The EXCELSIOR project is supported by more than 30 organizations from Cyprus and abroad. Several distinguished speakers from interested stakeholders have also addressed the event, including the Limassol Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber, the Cyprus Association of Research and Innovation Enterprises, the Department of Meteorology, the Cyprus Civil Defence and the Department of Lands and Surveys. Also, representatives from private sector enterprises addressed the event, such as the Cyprus Research & Innovation Center Ltd, the Avanti Communications Group plc and GEOFEM Ltd. A talk dedicated to the ‘Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation under HORIZON 2020 work programme for Research and Innovation’ was given by Mrs. Constantina Makri, on behalf of the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation. Finally, representatives from the five partners of the EXCELSIOR project consortium delivered brief presentations of their respective institutions. The launching of the EXCELSIOR project was carried out in the presence of a representative of the Ambassador of Germany in Cyprus.



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