

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH - MAY 2022

5th Edition

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## Director's Message



*Dear Volunteers, Dear All,*

With this Spring Edition of our Newsletter, I wish to share with you that more and more esteemed colleagues and researchers are expressing interest in using the Biobank infrastructure and facilities. Several colleagues are realizing the advantage of collaborating with a high standards Biobank and we are happy to work together in realizing their goals as well as in preparing and submitting their research grant proposals. During the past months, I had the opportunity to project the activities of the Biobank at various occasions in Cyprus and abroad, emphasizing on the prospects and advantages of becoming a volunteer, thus contributing to better health. Important stakeholders accepted our invitations or took the initiative to visit us and see in person the biobanking operation and related activities.

At the same time, there is significant work being done by a team of people in preparing for the second phase of the MITOS-2 project, aimed to enroll 500 family trios, two parents and one child. This is going to be a landmark project with multiple output and far-reaching deliverables. Importantly, this is going to engage the general population as well as members of the National Guard. The Ministry of Defense and the National Guard has given its approval to engage its members through a well-worked out strategy that shows respect to personal data and protection of privacy. Stay alert as we are preparing an awareness campaign where everybody has a role.

We invest in biobanking, we invest in a healthier Cyprus!





## MediEuro Network – Workshop 2022

took place between May 16th-17th at the Medical School of the University of Cyprus. Entitled "*Biobanking and Biomedical Research*" and organized by [biobank.cy](http://biobank.cy), the seminar hosted speakers from Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Qatar.



With this initiative, we feel proud and content that we contribute to bridging a gap between the southern Europe and countries with non-European populations, up to the Gulf region, thereby merging different genetic specificities ([Ελληνικά](#)).

## Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Health Affairs visited the Biobank of the University of Cyprus.

Mr. Efthymios Diplaros, Mrs. Savia Orfanidou, Mr. Christos Christofias and Mr. Michalis Yiacoumi were hosted at the [biobank.cy](http://biobank.cy), Center of Excellence, and were informed about its operations.

Professor Constantinos Deltas, presented the structure and work of [biobank.cy](http://biobank.cy) ([Ελληνικά](#)).



Watch [here](#) the Center's animation video, an introduction to [biobank.cy](http://biobank.cy) and how Cypriots can benefit from the CY-Biobank project ([Ελληνικά](#)).



The interview entitled "The Cypriots' DNA" was given by Professor Deltas on CyBC - Watch [here](#) ([Ελληνικά](#))



**The Center hosted its partners in the ADTKD-MUC1 project**, coordinated by Dr Gregoris Papagregoriou and Dr Christoforos Stavrou.

The leader of this project Dr Anna Greka (Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Massachusetts, USA), Dr Anthony J. Bleyer (Wake Forest Medical School, North Carolina, USA), and Dr Stanislav Kmoch with Dr Martina Zivna and Dr Petr Vylet'al (Charles University, Prague, CZ), visited Cyprus along with the world-renowned researcher and pioneer in kidney disease therapeutics Dr Peter Mundel.

After having a productive meeting with researchers at biobank.cy in Nicosia, our visitors attended a meeting with Cypriot patients in Pafos, to present recent advances in finding an effective treatment for ADTKD-MUC1 ([Ελληνικά](#)).



**The Center was visited by its advanced partners from the Medical University of Graz** Heimo Muller and Markus Plass. During their visit they were informed about the biobank operations and the capabilities the biobank.cy software systems for electronic data collection and biological sample management.

This was followed by a tour of the University of Cyprus datacenter and network operations center. Finally, there was a demonstration of the biobanks' hypervisor that manages the virtual infrastructure and the system that is used for variant annotation, enrichment of information and reporting ([Ελληνικά](#)).





In the framework of promoting biobank.cy to all Cypriots with fair inclusion of Minorities, the Center of Excellence in Biobanking and Medical Research at University of Cyprus hosted the **Maronite Archbishop, His Excellency Selim Sfeir**, accompanied by Dr Petros Katsioloudes and Fathers Antoine Succar and Antoine Roukos.

A thorough discussion of biobank.cy vision and mission to serve equally individuals regardless of ancestral origin was endorsed ([Ελληνικά](#)).



**Visit to Rector Tasos Christofides**, the President of the Council of the biobank.cy Center of Excellence Mrs E. Tanou, with the members Ambassador of Austria Mrs D. Auer, Mr M. Eliadis, and the Director of the Centre, C. Deltas. They discussed issues in view of positive developments ([Ελληνικά](#)).

The Director of the Center of Excellence in Biobanking and Biomedical Research biobank.cy, Prof. Constantinos Deltas, attended the **Adult Center of the Municipality of Deryneia** and delivered a lecture entitled "*The DNA of Cypriots and the Biobank of the University of Cyprus*" ([Ελληνικά](#)).



Members of our Center visited the **Medical University of Graz in Austria** and attended the seminar entitled *"Managing Multidisciplinary Teams and Scientific Projects in Biobanks."*

The scientific and administrative staff of the biobank.cy is constantly trained in issues of organization, administration and quality in order to face the continuous challenges of this demanding field.

This seminar was offered by the specialized team of the Biobank of Graz University ([Ελληνικά](#)).



We had the honor to host **His Excellency the Ambassador of Israel to Cyprus, Mr. Oren Anolik**, at our Centre of Excellence.

Following a tour in our premises, a fruitful meeting was held involving exchange of ideas on possible ways of collaboration. ([Ελληνικά](#)).



Dr Natasa Giallourou, Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Cyprus, gave an interview to CyBC entitled "Decoding metabolism". [Watch here.](#) ([Ελληνικά](#)).



Reportage on biobank.cy, Center of Excellence in Biobanking and Biomedical Research, in the TV news bulletin of CyBC. [Watch here.](#) ([Ελληνικά](#)).

On **International Women's Day**, we celebrate women's achievements and raise global awareness about gender equality.

At the Biobank of the University of Cyprus, we are proud of our commitment to promoting gender equality in research and innovation, where women represent 67 per cent of our team. Most of them are intimately engaged in research, with key role positions in metabolomics and transcriptomics analysis, biobanking, volunteer recruitment, and various other areas. Additionally, four of the Biobank's members hold managerial positions whereas twelve are ACCA or PhD holders (Ελληνικά)



Since 1965 at the initiative of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), **World Nurses Day** has been celebrated every year on May 12th.

We are proud of our nurses here at biobank.cy for their daily contribution to the society. Nurses play a vital role in the operation of a Biobank as they are the link between patients or healthy volunteers, researchers, doctors and other health professionals. (Ελληνικά).

CLICK & CONNECT







Watch [here](#) our short animated video, an introduction to who we are, what biobanking is all about and how Cypriots can benefit from the CY-Biobank project, which is funded by the EU, the Republic of Cyprus and the University of Cyprus ([Ελληνικά](#)).



Our new offices have been operating since May, at 89 Kennedy Avenue.



biobank.cy new promotional material has been printed.

The CY-BIOBANK Consortium:



This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the University of Cyprus, under grant agreement No. 857122.

