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Cyprus stirs controversy with Sweden in heritage pact

Cyprus sparks criticism in unconventional museum collaboration with Sweden



File photo



Apostolos Kouroupakis

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In a historic move, the Technological University of Cyprus (TEPAK) and Sweden's State Museums, represented by Ann Follin from Medelhavsmuseet, have formally inked a Collaboration Agreement.

The aim? To digitize the entire collection of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities Museum, with the ultimate goal of making the results openly accessible worldwide. This marks a significant milestone in 21st-century global developments, as it's the first instance of a country hosting foreign antiquities inviting an organization from the country of origin to participate in digitization efforts.

Medelhavsmuseet, home to the largest collection of Cypriot antiquities outside Cyprus, was drawn to TEPAK's expertise in digital heritage. The collaboration involves TEPAK experts, led by Dr. Marinos Ioannidis, actively engaging with archaeological artifacts spanning over 7,000 years. The ambitious project aims to create a strategic plan for the digitization of thousands of items, contributing to the preservation and global accessibility of Cyprus's unique cultural wealth.

Dr. Ioannidis, head of TEPAK's specialized scientific team, expressed satisfaction with the international recognition of their contribution to New Technologies and cultural heritage digitization.

The collaboration not only marks a digital repatriation of artifacts but also reunites them with Cyprus's collections. This initiative, a century after the Swedish Archaeological Mission to Cyprus and two decades into Cyprus's EU membership, signifies a new era of cultural diplomacy.

The project's broader impact on Cyprus's culture and TEPAK's global standing was highlighted by Dr. Ioannidis. He emphasized TEPAK's role as a global reference point in New Technologies, knowledge production, and cultural heritage management. This initiative sets an example for countries facing similar challenges and demonstrates the potential of digital access and the posting of materials in Europeana's digital library.

In the context of Cultural Diplomacy, this collaboration stands out as a significant invitation from a Swedish museum to a Cypriot entity, showcasing a century-long history of archaeological relations and diplomatic ties.

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As the specialized scientific team, along with dedicated students, assesses and strategizes on-site, the project promises to reshape the narrative of how countries approach cultural heritage preservation in the digital age.

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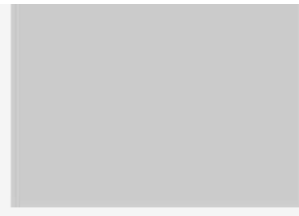
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