

## The UNESCO headquarters in TEPAK was visited by the Swedish Ambassador to Cyprus

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### NEWS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### A brilliant day for the Cyprus University of Technology

##### Partnership agreement connects TEPAK and the Medelhavsmuseet of Sweden

May 24, 2024 was a brilliant day for TEPAK, since it had the pleasure of welcoming the Swedish Ambassador to Cyprus, **Mr. Martin Hagström**, who, appreciating the important scientific work carried out by the University of Cyprus, wanted to be informed closely about the importance of the international cooperation in the **preservation and promotion** of cultural heritage between TEPAK-Edra Unesco and the Swedish Museum **Medelhavsmuseet**, where the largest Cypriot collection housed outside of Cyprus is hosted.

During this special visit, and in the presence of the Vice-Chancellor of TEPAK Professor Evangelos Akylas and the representative of the Department of Antiquities Mr. Yiannis Violaris, the results of the diplomatic work of Mrs. Desouki Zelias, an extremely important mission of TEPAK for the Cypriot, were presented Culture and the cultural goods of Cyprus, located in museums abroad, which developed in Stockholm, Sweden in the past months and concluded with the **signing of a Cooperation Agreement between TEPAK and the Medelhavsmuseet Museum (Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities)**, where archaeological findings spanning a period of more than 7,000 years - from the Stone Age to Imperial Rome and which testify to frequent and long-term contacts between Cyprus and other cultures in the eastern Mediterranean region.

##### Brief history

It all started after the honorary invitation received by the Director of the UNESCO/TEPAK Chair, **Dr. Marinos Ioannidis**, who was invited as a Key Note Speaker at the Europeana International Conference, held on April 18, 2023, under the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU and hosted by the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, while it had the support of the Swedish Ministry of Culture and was organized in collaboration with the Swedish National Heritage Council.

After continuous, methodical and intensive talks, the Medelhavsmuseet **in Stockholm**, which has the largest collection of Cypriot antiquities outside of Cyprus, recognizing the seriousness, high expertise and respect at the world level, of the UNESCO Chair of TEPAK, sent an invitation to the specialized scientists from TEPAK, who deal with the digitization of cultural heritage, in order to examine the possibility of digitizing the huge collection with thousands of objects, which the Museum has and which come from the excavations in Cyprus.

These excavations were carried out in the period 1927-1931 by the Swedish Archaeological Mission to Cyprus, led by the later King of Sweden **Gustav VI Adolf**, and most of the archaeological material from those excavations is now kept in the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia and the Medelhavsmuseet in Stockholm.

So, therefore, the - highly specialized - scientific team of TEPAK, responded immediately and was moved at the expense of the UNESCO Headquarters, in order to examine on site these important archaeological findings (**>25000**) and to draw up a strategic plan for their digitization, the duration of which was proportionate to the degree of difficulty and complexity of the work. ([https://unescochair-dch.net/3D\\_Modelling\\_CY\\_Artifacts\\_Sweden](https://unescochair-dch.net/3D_Modelling_CY_Artifacts_Sweden))

##### Visit of the Ambassador of Cyprus to Sweden to the workplace of the TEPAK team

The Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Sweden, **Mr. Solon Savvas**, visited the specialized Cypriot scientific team at the **Medelhavsmuseet** Museum, led by **Mr. Marino Ioannidis**, who expressed his satisfaction with the positive developments and the involvement of an emblematic Cypriot university in the workplace, rescuing and promoting Cypriot cultural heritage, which is hosted, unfortunately, outside of Cyprus, in the Stockholm museum and is an integral part of the history and tradition of the Cypriot people.

The Cypriot Ambassador stated that upon assuming his duties in Sweden in 2022, he expressed to the King of Sweden **Carl XVI Gustaf** his readiness and commitment to further strengthening and deepening bilateral relations, but also to closer cooperation in addressing common challenges.

For his part, the King of Sweden referred to the excellent relations between the two countries, which date back centuries and made special mention of the importance of the Swedish Archaeological Mission in Cyprus in the period 1927-1931 and the imperative need to respect and protect the cultural heritage of all countries.

Such a deepening of relations takes place through this great collaboration between TEPAK and the Medelhavsmuseet of Sweden, which indeed sends out multiple messages of respect and protection of cultural heritage and is an example to be emulated.

##### Global pioneer in Cultural Diplomacy

The head of the specialized scientific team that worked methodically at the **Medelhavsmuseet** Museum, but also the creator of this great effort and international cooperation, between Cyprus and Sweden, which establishes new customs and data in international cultural exchanges, **Dr. Marinos Ioannidis** -Director of the UNESCO Chair/ TEPAK, warmly thanked **Mr. Martin Hagström - Ambassador of Sweden in Cyprus** and expressed his satisfaction with the developments and the international and global recognition of TEPAK for its contribution to New Technologies and the digitization of Human culture, creating new knowledge and policies in the global setting and stated the following:

*"It is worth noting that this collaboration and the particularly important invitation from the Museum of Sweden, to a Cypriot institution, to digitize Cypriot archaeological material, which has been located outside Cyprus for almost a century, is a global pioneer and creates new*

data in the so-called **Cultural Diplomacy** and contributes the most to education, research, innovation, rescue, documentation and of course the highlighting of the unique Cypriot cultural wealth, wherever it is, through open source digital access and the posting of this material in the digital library of Europe Europeana .

This cooperation can be an example and good practice for all countries facing similar issues.

This achievement included the digitization of the first artefacts from the Swedish Cyprus Mission – the largest collection of Cypriot artefacts outside of Cyprus. This effort marks an important **milestone** towards the **Virtual Reunification - Repatriation of the Cypriot Collection** .

The digital **reunification** of Cyprus' cultural heritage is more than just a technological feat and is a symbol of bridging geographical divides and preserving our rich **culture** for future generations.

It is the first time in the world that a unique collaboration between **multidisciplinary** experts and policy makers has transformed a long-held dream into reality.

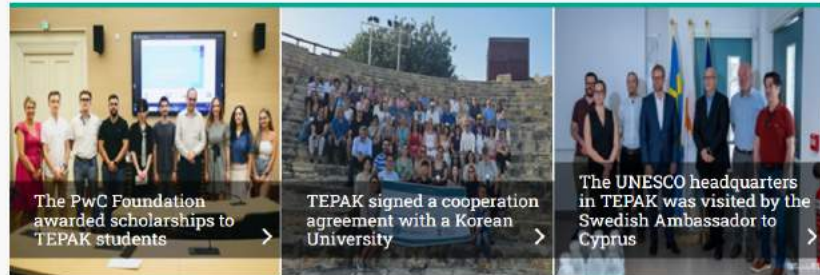
With this project, it is the first time that the **digital repatriation** of works, which are missing from the cultural heritage of Cyprus and are hosted in museums around the world, is taking place, while at the same time, with the use of new technologies, **they are being reunited with the collections of Cyprus**.

And this is happening, almost a hundred years after the Swedish Archaeological Mission to Cyprus (1927-1931), twenty years after the accession of Cyprus to the EU, twenty years since the establishment of the Swedish Embassy in Cyprus as well as the Cypriot Embassy in Sweden , and twenty years after the establishment of TEPAK.

With TEPAK's global leadership in the field of Digitization of Human Cultural Heritage, which led, in fact, to the honorary assignment of the corresponding UNESCO Chair and through major events ( EuroMed World Conferences , international Forums , seminars, European projects of tens of millions which create new jobs in Cyprus and produce excellent national work for Cyprus etc.) and gather the interest of the scientific community from all over the world, TEPAK and Cyprus have become a global point of reference in New Technologies and in the production of knowledge and creation of cultural heritage management and rescue policies".



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### CONTACT INFO

Arch. Kyprianou 30  
3036 Limassol

☎ 2500 2500

📠 2500 2750

✉ administration@cut.ac.cy



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