

**Address by Professor Andreas Papapavlou,**  
**Dean of the Faculty of Humanities,**  
**at the opening ceremony of the Aula Cervantes in Nicosia,**  
**16 February, 2011.**

**Your Excellency the Ambassador of Spain,**

**Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners,**

**Mr Rector of the University of Cyprus,**

**Dear Director of the Instituto Cervantes in Sofia,**

**Dear Director of Administration and Finance,**

**Dear guests,**

It is a great honor to address today before you, the inaugural ceremony of the AULA Cervantes. By definition, being a project that aspires to promote the Spanish Language and Culture, the AULA Cervantes belongs to the School of Humanities, the School that promotes foreign languages and cultures. Today, as the Dean of the School I am very proud to present the AULA that was created in Cyprus, thus adding one more center of the Cervantes Institute in the non-Spanish speaking world.

It is true that Spain and Cyprus share common values and characteristics as both countries are full members of the EU and are geographically located in the Mediterranean. Among other things, they both feature similar weather conditions with long sunny summers, beautiful beaches, similar agricultural products, good wine but their most prominent common element is their

people: warm, beautiful and emotional people who love life and live each day to the fullest.

In spite of the similarities, people in Cyprus are not well aware of Spain and its culture (even though football fans can name some Spanish cities after the football teams they watch on the TV). This is quite astonishing since the Spanish language is the second most natively spoken language in the world after mandarin. Furthermore, the numbers of Spanish speaking people in Cyprus are increasing with people from Spain and Latin and Central America finding a home in this little island of the Mediterranean. The AULA will attempt to fill this gap and bring the Spanish culture and language closer to Cyprus.

The policy behind this collaboration between the University of Cyprus and the Instituto Cervantes is fully aligned with the European Commission's policies on the promotion of European languages. It is also compatible with the objective of the Bologna Process to create a European Higher Education Area, based on international cooperation and academic exchange. The AULA Cervantes aspires to facilitate the mobility of students and even teachers mainly through the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU. Since Spain is the most popular destination for ERASMUS students, the AULA Cervantes can be our University's "help desk" for interested students.

In closing, I would like to express my warm welcome to the Director of the AULA Cervantes, Mr. Javier Dias Gervassini, who has undertaken the responsibility of running the operation of the AULA. As I have committed myself during our private conversations, I once more state that I will do everything in my power to help him tackle the upcoming challenges successfully because the AULA is not just a laboratory but it is the bridge between Cyprus and the Spanish speaking world. Thank you.

A hora me gustaria decir algunas palabras en Espanol.

Es un placer ver muchas personas en esta ceremonia, la inauguración del AULA Cervantes. Los objetivos del ALULA Cervantes de Nicosia son:

- (a) establecer relaciones educativas y culturales entre Chipre, España y otros países de la comunidad hispana
- (b) organizar eventos culturales en Nicosia y en otras partes de la isla, y
- (c) ofrecer recursos al público que está interesado por la lengua española.