

PRESS RELEASE

Contact:

Communication Office
Promotion and Development Section
University of Cyprus
Tel.: 22894304, Fax: 22894477
E-mail: prinfo@ucy.ac.cy,
Web-site: www.ucy.ac.cy/pr

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UCY Senate Expresses Disappointment Over OECD's PISA 2015 Results

Cyprus going backwards in all core subjects

The Senate of the University of Cyprus (UCY) has expressed disappointment over the lately published 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) results of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which reveal an alarming decline in standards and performance of the Cypriot 15-year-old students across all subject areas (science, maths, reading). The results show that Cyprus not only has failed to improve its place in these world rankings, but is going backwards.

The findings have been described as stark and alarming: Cyprus has scored 437 points in maths, 433 points in sciences and 443 points in reading, continuing to lag well below the OECD averages (490 for maths and 493 for sciences and reading).

The performance of our students in major international assessments, like PISA or TIMSS, demonstrates clearly that our education system does not sufficiently reflect the country's needs and falls short of young people's expectations. The nation's teenagers do not get the support and guidance they need to develop the key skills of adolescence; our education system continues to fail in providing our learners with confidence and knowledge to address today real life challenges and succeed in life and work. Poor-performing schools do not support greater opportunities, economic growth and prosperity. Continuing to do so, it will result in running the great risk that the new generations will not have the opportunities they deserve; Cyprus will not be able to compete against the rest of Europe and the world.

The conclusion to be drawn from the new findings is clear: there is no room for complacency. University of Cyprus invites Ministry of Education and Culture to evaluate the results of the international assessments and draw on the expertise and know-how of the Cypriot academic community, so as to identify the factors that have led to the creation of weaknesses in our education system. UCY intends to play his part in doing so and contribute substantially to Ministry's consistent efforts to turn things around, aiming to improve Cyprus education quality and performance in learning assessments. It is worth mentioning, that there has been improved performance of primary education pupils in maths, according to TIMSS results. International assessments along with recommendations for improvement made by international organizations should be taken into consideration by all education policy makers and stakeholders when planning on how to achieve a positive change in performance in the school sector, with pupils and students being always the focal point and priority. Self-assessment and self-criticism are necessary when striving for continuous improvements in education quality.

PISA 2015/Cyprus: <http://www.compareyourcountry.org/pisa/country/cyp>

End of Announcement