

## THALIA PETRIDES

Ambassador Thalia Petrides is a career diplomat in the Foreign Service of the Republic of Cyprus. She has a degree in law from the University of Athens Law School and a postgraduate degree in diplomacy / international relations from the Institute of Public Administration in Paris. She is fluent in English, French, Portuguese and Greek (mother tongue). She was married to the late Frixos Petrides (former minister of education) and has one son Loizos Petrides (economist).

### Career

Thalia Petrides is currently Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Portugal since February 2011.

From January 2007 to December 2010, Ambassador of Cyprus to Finland and also accredited to Estonia.

From October 2004 to December 2006, Political Director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, position which entails an overall supervision of the implementation of the external policy of the country. As the first Political Director after the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, Ambassador Petrides was called to restructure the entire Political Department of the Ministry to meet the challenges and the increased responsibilities for participating in the EU relevant institutions.

From October 1999 to August 2004, Ambassador of Cyprus to Portugal and also accredited to the Republic of Cabo Verde.

From November 1996 to September 1999, Ambassador / Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

From April 1994 to October 1996, Director of European Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

From July 1992 to April 1994, Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the CSCE in Vienna.

At the beginning of her career served at various departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nicosia dealing with political, economic, and cultural affairs. Represented the Ministry in interministerial committees in the field of culture, consumer policy, environmental protection and human rights. In the period 1980-83 she was a member of the National Commission for Equality and Women's Rights, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the period 1984-1986 Director of the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry and subsequently Director of the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. During that period she had oversight of the whole spectrum of the activities of the Ministry and the Cypriot embassies abroad, including their staffing, communications, and logistics. Participated in numerous bilateral negotiations with a wide variety of subjects and in negotiations and talks with the UN in Cyprus on peacekeeping and humanitarian issues. In the same period served as a member of the National Committee on Communication and Information Policy of Cyprus.

From November 1986 until early 1989, Representative of Cyprus to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Follow-up Meeting in Vienna.

From 1989 to 1992, Director of the CSCE Co-ordination Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nicosia.

For one year (March 1989 – April 1990), Representative of Cyprus to the CSCE negotiations of confidence-building measures.

For two years (1991-1992) represented Cyprus to the Committee of Senior officials of the CSCE which held frequent meetings in Prague.

From March to July 1992 Head of the Cyprus Delegation to the CSCE Follow-up Conference in Helsinki.

#### Participation in international meetings, conferences and seminars

Ambassador Petrides participated in several international conferences of the United Nations, the Non-Aligned movement, the Neutral and Non-Aligned countries of the CSCE, the Commonwealth, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. To name but a few, the World Conference for the decade of Women (Nairobi 1985), the Commonwealth Summit in Harare in 1986, the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Development and Disarmament (New York 1988), the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna 1993), the Council of Europe Summits (Vienna 1993 and Strasbourg 1997). From 1986 to 1996 participated in all major conferences of the CSCE – OSCE. Also took part in numerous official visits of the foreign minister and the president of the Republic in countries of Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. In her capacity as Political Director, Ambassador Petrides represented Cyprus in various high-level conferences and meetings of the EU.

Participated actively with written or oral contributions in numerous seminars, in Cyprus and abroad, mainly on issues related to current European affairs, North – South dialogue, protection and promotion of human rights, equality and non-discrimination, confidence – building measures, transparency in defense budgets, conflict prevention, crisis-management and the role of the media in society.

Worth mentioning, among others, the following international seminars where she participated as a panelist or keynote speaker:

- *"Human Rights and Religious Freedom in Europe for Peace and in the Spirit of Helsinki"* (Venice, February 1988),
- *"Human Rights in Cyprus and the CSCE"* (Nicosia, April 1990),
- *"The Code of conduct of the States in the field of politico-military aspects of security"* (The Hague, December 1995),
- *"The OSCE Mediterranean Seminar on norms of behaviour"* (Tel Aviv, June 1996),
- *"The role of Journalists in promoting Respect for Human Rights"* (Athens, October 1997).
- Assumed the preparation, organization and overall co-ordination of the international seminar *"Security of smaller States"*, (Nicosia, January 1996) with over a hundred participants from 21 European states.
- Participated in the *"Seminar on preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution"* organized by UNITAR (July 2002, Oslo).

- She was appointed as a rapporteur to the *Seminar on Women in Diplomacy*, organized by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in October 2004.
- She took part as a panelist in the *3<sup>rd</sup> International Political Marketing Conference*, held in Nicosia in April 2006.
- Acted as Chairperson for the conference on ASEM Interfaith Dialogue and oversaw the entire co-ordination for the convention, with over 200 participants from 40 States and International Organisations (Larnaca, July 2006).

#### **Publications**

Author of three books under the general title "Building a new Europe", published (in Greek) by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nicosia in 1989, 1990 and 1995.

Author of the acclaimed book "Contemporary Open Diplomacy" published (in Greek) by the Estia Publishing House, Athens 1993.

Editor / contributing author of the book "Security of Smaller States", published (in English) by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nicosia in 1996.

While serving as Ambassador / Permanent Representative in Strasbourg, she was elected in early 1997 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe as Chairperson of the Group of Rapporteurs on Information Policy of the Organisation. In her capacity as chairperson, she worked in close cooperation with the CoE Secretariat and published an extensive Report for the enhancement of the public image of the Organisation in the member states.

She coordinated the first ever photography exhibition of foreign Ambassadors serving in Finland and was the editor and contributing author of the book "Ambassadors' Photo Show" (Helsinki 2010).

Contributed articles and interviews to the Cypriot press, as well as to the media in countries she served as a diplomat.

#### **Other activities**

Personal interests include writing, animal welfare, astronomy, visual arts, music, photography and gardening.