

Keeping you up to date with the latest news on Human Resource issues and developments as well as Association news.

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## Interesting Quotes

*“Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour ... If at my convenience I might break them, what would be their worth?”*

— Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

## 1. Welcome Note from the Editor

Dear readers,

A difficult year has ended and a new one full of challenges has just begun.

One may think it's not easy for an HR professional to set goals for 2013 since much of what we have to address is caused by factors out of our sphere of direct control. Nevertheless, despite the multitude of wrong choices that have been taken and which have had dire consequences for most of the organizations of Cyprus, we the HR professionals have to redefine the way we work in each and every organization. We are obliged to change our approach towards our community who is fighting to maintain a hard earned standard of living and in some cases its basic survival. THIS is the time to shine, to show our character, test our resilience and adopt a human approach towards our colleagues.

This is a great opportunity for HR to prove its values and for us HR professionals to prove our abilities to lead organizational change. So let's start change by revisiting the way we do our work. Small changes can lead to remarkable, high value outcomes!

*Yota Tsiokri*

## 2. Bright Idea

### How to Cultivate a strong sense of ethics among Employees

Entire companies have been taken down by the reckless behavior of one person. Even if they don't set out to cheat, steal, or lie, people can still do destructive things. Here are three ways to minimize risky behavior:

- **Hire right.** Don't rely on resumes and references. Anyone can fake those. Consider going a level deeper and doing **employment and background checks**. Some risk-averse companies also conduct behavioral and honesty testing to screen employees.
- **Incentivize the right behavior.** People don't do what you tell them to do; **they do what you pay them to do**. Make sure your company's performance measurement and incentive systems don't encourage the wrong behaviors.
- **Create an open culture.** People shouldn't be afraid to speak up when they see something fishy. Make sure you have **risk escalation and whistleblower processes** in place and actively encourage people to use them when necessary.

*Today's Bright Idea was adopted from Harvard Business Review October 25, 2012*

### 3. HR in Black & White

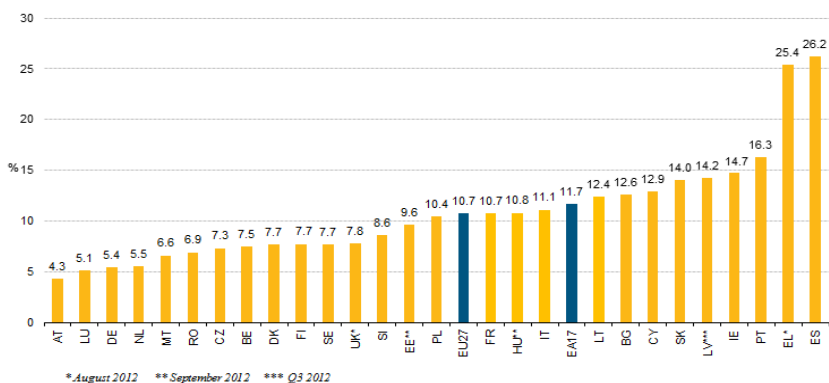
Extracting information and data from Eurostat; Statistical Service of Cyprus, European Commission and other related sources, the following article sketches the employment situation in EU area and in Cyprus.

#### The European & Cyprus (Un)Employment Setting in a Nutshell

According to Eurostat, in October 2012, unemployment rate in EU area (EU17) reached the percentage of 11.7%, indicating a significant increase from the October's 2011 rate, which was 10.4%. The lowest unemployment rates were recorded in Austria (4.3%), Luxembourg (5.1%), Germany (5.4%) and the Netherlands (5.5%). The highest rates are observed in Spain (26.2%) and Greece (25.4% in August 2012). Compared with September 2011, the highest increases in the unemployment rates were recorded in Greece, Cyprus (from 9.2% to 12.9%), Spain and Portugal.

Interesting are also the unemployment figures related to some of the most important demographic characteristics of the EU population. For example, regarding gender-related figures, unemployment among males increased from 10.3% (in October 2011) to 11.6% (in October 2012). Following a similar pattern, unemployment in females increased from 10.7% to 11.8%. Regarding age-related unemployment rates, 3.609 million young individuals (under 25 years old) were unemployed in October 2012 (23.9% in terms of percentage). Compared to October 2011, this number has increased by 350 000 (the percentage of young unemployed in October was 21.2%).

Figure: Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted, October 2012



Source: Eurostat

Following the same trends as in the rest of Europe, the figures in Cyprus in regards to unemployment seem to be constantly increasing, without any sign of recovery. The latest statistics regarding the registered unemployed individuals coming from the statistical service of Cyprus confirm the seriousness of the situation. According to the District Labour Offices, during the last day of November 2012, 39.522 persons were registered as unemployed.

In particular, compared to November 2011, an increase of 7.696 persons or 24.2% of job losses was recorded. The impact was mainly observed in the following sectors:

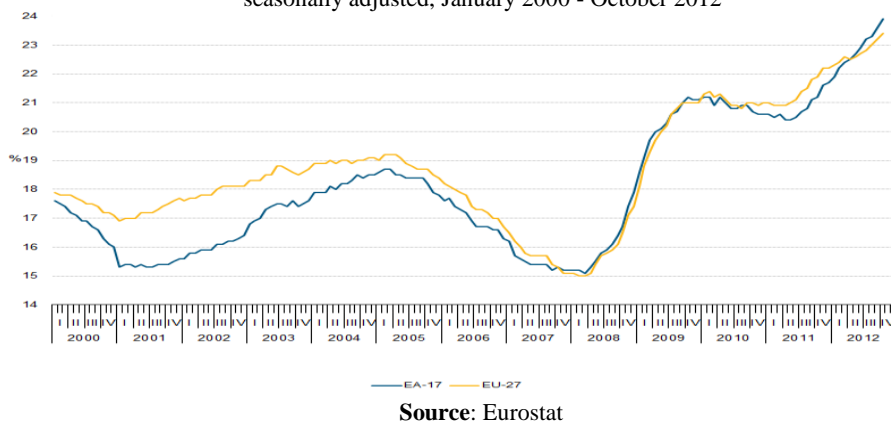
- **Trade** (an increase of 1.625 unemployed persons)
- **Construction** (an increase of 1.343 unemployed persons)
- **Accommodation and food service activities** (an increase of 1.148 unemployed persons)
- **Manufacturing** (an increase of 792 unemployed persons)
- **Public administration** (an increase of 626 unemployed persons)

Moreover, the latest announcements and data of the European Commission regarding Cyprus should be highlighted. Among others, the most worrying indication is that 'youth unemployment rate has reached more than 25% in 13 Member States, with Greece and Spain experiencing rates of over 55% and Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Bulgaria, **Cyprus**, Latvia, Hungary and Slovakia with rates around or above 30%'. The situation becomes even more serious considering the fact that the opportunities for young unemployed individuals to find a job are low.

Perhaps, the best way to conclude this short article is by just stating the opening of the speech offered by the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor, during the press conference in Brussels (05/12/2012):

*'...7.5 million young Europeans between 15 and 24 are not employed, not in education and not in training...More than one in five young Europeans on the labour market cannot find a job; in Greece and Spain it is one in two...And in the last four years, the overall employment rates for young people fell three times as much as for adults...The situation is clearly unacceptable: we must take action'*

Figure: Youth unemployment rates, EU-27 and EA-17, seasonally adjusted, January 2000 - October 2012



Source: Eurostat

Contributed by Photis Pavlou

## 4. HR On Stage

### Gronholm Method

Written by Jordi Galtheran

Directed by Diagoras Hronopoulos

Translated by George Karamichos / Maria Tsatsaroni

Four job applicants enter a sealed room for a collective “final” interview for a top executive post in marketing at a Fortune 500 corporation, Dexia. Fernando (portrayed by Andreas Fylaktou) is a ferocious competitor, a true believer in business ruthlessness. Enrice (played by Andreas Tsouris) appears mousier but hides a subtle streak of masterly manipulation. The younger Carlos (portrayed by Andreas Tselepos) and Mercedes (played by Christina Christofia) were fellow MBA graduates, long out of touch but both aggressive and savvy. Together they are asked to engage in multiple games with obscure motivations, beginning with trying to guess who among them is the plant from “Human Relations.” Anyone can leave at any time but would forfeit the job by doing so.

As the role-playing demanded of them becomes more outlandish and the stakes continue to intensify, the politics of interpersonal relations stand as metaphors for corporate irresponsibility and rogue psychology. The play is a hymn to humiliation candidates may suffer while they are exposed to a recruitment process. It is a fairly vicious indictment of the ethics of careerist success, but its mechanics are so inventive and the twists so dramatically engaging that one is more likely to become involved in the gamesmanship and sharp dialogue than in the incidental social commentary. With each turn in the plot, sympathies are wrenched and the playwright surprises us with our own abilities to switch attitudes and viewpoints toward the characters. What the script shows at the extreme is that it doesn't matter who we are or how we are but what it looks we are, because our real identity is not of the interviewer's interest.

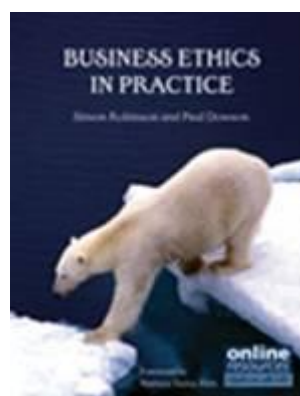
Of course, to make such machine hum convincingly, all the parts must function with precision. The actors were shifting gears effortlessly and confounding our expectations as they reveal unexpected dimensions to the characters, who admittedly are more constructions of recognizable behaviors than people with internal lives.

There was an interesting mosaic of human behaviours and characters whose resilience was constantly tested in this play. Fernando incarnates the suit as quintessential ruthless candidate and wraps his voice around his snarky lines with a relish both infectious and repellant, nevertheless at the end he was only too vulnerable. A highly arrogant person who showed many biases throughout the recruitment process (sexism, ageism and racism against transsexuals). The others are even more chameleonic, deft without signaling any turns.

At the end of the performance, a talk with the actors took place. They tried to explain their feelings towards the play and the characters they were incarnating and if these extreme recruitment methods are existent in Cyprus. A great advice we should all keep at the back of our mind was given by Andreas Tselepos who challenged us all to try and add “art” in our everyday duties, no matter how administrative they are.

*Contributed by Kyriacos Andreou, Yota Tsiokri, Kiki Kallis*

## 5. Book Review



Authors: Simon J. Robinson and Paul Dowson

Publisher: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

ISBN 9781843982722

When I was reading this book I recall what Marianna Fotaki, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Business Ethics at the Manchester Business School said in an interview to Cyprus Weekly that “we need to understand that businesses are part of society and not an outgrowth over and above society, and we need to instill this in our leaders. Values are important issues that make life meaningful and our businesses cannot be dishonest with the values of the community and society”.

The publication under review is a textbook about business ethics for undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as for business people of all sorts especially those in the HR field and related professions. It is very clear now that the present economic crisis with its devastating and still unfolding impact on a huge number of people is rightly seen as a failure of corporate culture and governance or more accurately a failure of moral values of certain business leaders.

The cover of this book shows a polar bear on the edge of an ice-floe, focusing on the next step that will provide a pathway to survival. It reminds the reader that humanity is on the edge, trying to work out how it will sustain its depleted environment, discovering pathways together. In the present time the world economy including Cyprus is on the edge of collapse that will affect the lives of people. The search for pathways is not just about economic survival BUT about discovering the values and ethics in business which will sustain meaning and purpose in an uncertain environment.

The book provides:

- Key tools for understanding and practicing ethics in business,
- Critical reflection on practice and values in key areas of the business ethical environment including but not limited to leadership qualities, organisation culture, human resource management, relationships to the different professions in business, the consumers and the wider social and physical environments,
- Ways and means to the reader to practise ethics in the context of his/her business or in education and training.

And a word for the authors. Simon J. Robinson is Professor of Applied and Professional Ethics at Leeds Metropolitan University who has written and researched extensively in Business Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility with several publications in his portfolio. Paul Dowson is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Applied Global Ethics at Leeds Metropolitan University.

*Contributed by Costas Papakyriacou*

## 6. Makes you think!

# NOTICE

**THIS DEPARTMENT REQUIRES NO  
PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM.**

**EVERYONE GETS ENOUGH EXERCISE  
JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS, FLYING  
OFF THE HANDLE, RUNNING DOWN  
THE BOSS, KNIFING FRIENDS IN THE  
BACK, DODGING RESPONSIBILITY,  
AND PUSHING THEIR LUCK.**

## 7. HR Forthcoming Events

### CYPRUS:

CyHRMA Annual Party

Business Breakfast, Nicosia

*15<sup>th</sup> May 2013*

CyHRMA Annual Conference 2013

### INTERNATIONAL:

*18<sup>th</sup> January 2013*

EAPM Executive Committee Meeting, Bucharest, Romania

*11<sup>th</sup> May 2013*

CRANET Meeting, USA

*22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013*

EAPM Executive Committee Meeting, Florence, Italy

*23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013*

EAPM Delegates Assembly, Florence, Italy

## 9. Editorial Team of this issue

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