

**SPEECH OF BPW NICOSIA PRESIDENT MARY PAPADOPOULOU
AT TWINNING CEREMONY
BPW NICOSIA / BPW BASEL
SEPTEMBER 11th 2014**

There is no ALPHA and there is no OMEGA in Mathesis.

There is no ALPHA and there is no OMEGA in Friendship.

Es gibt kein A und kein Z in Freundschaft.

Distinguished guests, dear BPW members, it is an honor and gives me great pleasure to welcome you this evening.

It is a historical evening since we are gathered here for the solemn signing of the twinning agreement between BPW Nicosia and BPW Basel and at this very moment we are about to receive the first rewards from this partnership.

It all started in Munich.

In the streets of Munich on the way to the European Congress back in 2009.

Since Marianna Vrahimi and I did not know the exact location of the congress we decided to follow some ladies holding the same congress bags with us.

We were talking in Greek.

Suddenly one of the ladies that we were following turn to say “You speak Greek”...

Georgia Bross was her name...

That was the beginning...

A year later on September 12 2010 we met again, this time in Greece,

for the launching of a new Club, that of BPW Athens, which BPW Nicosia proudly helped to create and which today is writing its own chapter in the history of Business and Professional Women.

And here we are this evening.....

As Victor Hugo said “nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come”.

Twinning is a formal bond of friendship.

Tonight we celebrate the cross cultural relationship that is being created between BPW Nicosia and BPW Basel, but more importantly we celebrate the friendships that have emanated from the relationship,

that brings together people from different backgrounds, different age groups, different languages.

We will learn about one another's history and culture,
We will share knowledge,
promote BPW aims of equality and the achievement of common goals.

We support the interchange of development opportunities for all.

We aim to increase the effectiveness of international networking between business and professional women and foster a willingness to cement lasting friendships.

Through the exchange of experiences and activities we will strive to do our best at whatever task is at hand.

All these and more, I am sure, together we will achieve.

“A dream you dream alone is only a dream, a dream you dream together is reality”

Tonight we signed the Certificate of Agreement in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus.

The ancient kingdom of Ledra.

The only divided city in Europe.

You had a chance this morning dear friends from Basel to witness it.

Actually behind this very wall is what is called the Green Line.

It got the name when a United Nations officer drew the line on a map with green ink following the Turkish invasion.

A no-man's land

between decaying, bullet – pocked buildings, ruins, desolation

and bitter memories for the lawful owners who have been driven out of their properties by force.

A Symbol of everything that should not be.

And this green line lengthened and imposed by the Turkish military forces, became the unofficial border across the island.

A wall of division.

A shame and symbolic wound in the vision of a United Europe.

September 11th 2014.

Tonight we draw the roadmap that will lead BPW Nicosia and BPW Basel to walk a journey together.

And this journey (which certainly will not be an easy one) its taking place during difficult times.

In the melancholy brought about by the global social, economic and financial crisis.

We have to be like the birds, the birds that pause on their flight a while, on a branch that is likely to break , feel the branch break , yet sing , knowing they have wings.

This twinning will give us the inspiration and strength, the wings, to go on working for the future and our dreams of equality, peace and opportunity for all making a Difference through Leadership and Action building on BPW International's solid foundation.

Thank you all for being here tonight

Thank you for sharing the special evening with us.

