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# Social Cohesion Monitoring Cyprus

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## Research Report

**Prepared for:** "Enhancing policies and structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus" project

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# 1.Introduction

## 1.1 General Introduction

Social cohesion is a critical element in ensuring the stability and prosperity of diverse communities, and it is a core objective for the Council of Europe, as demonstrated by the establishment of the [Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion \(CDADI\)](#). Across the continent, and even beyond its borders, the Council of Europe has committed to promoting integration and reducing social inequalities, with the goal of fostering more cohesive and inclusive societies. The mission of breaking down barriers to social integration is not only central to the Council's efforts but also aligns closely with the broader goals of the European Union (EU), which seeks to create an environment where all residents, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or religion, feel valued and included.

The Council of Europe's emphasis on social cohesion stems from the belief that cohesive societies are more resilient, more prosperous, and better equipped to face both internal and external challenges. By addressing inequalities, promoting inclusivity, and enhancing political participation, the Council aims to reduce tensions that arise from social, economic, and cultural divides. This is particularly crucial in an era of increasing migration, where large numbers of foreign-born residents are contributing to the cultural and social fabric of European nations. The challenge lies in ensuring that these populations are effectively integrated and that local communities embrace the diversity that arises from this movement of people.

At its heart, the Council of Europe's mission to promote social cohesion reflects its deep commitment to fostering communities where everyone, irrespective of their background, has equal access to opportunities and is empowered to contribute to society. This includes creating policies that promote equality in education, housing, employment, and political participation—areas that are essential to fostering an inclusive society. Moreover, the Council seeks to ensure that anti-discrimination measures are robust and visible, so that all residents feel secure and supported.

This report aligns with the Council of Europe's vision by exploring the state of social cohesion in Cyprus, specifically in the districts of Limassol and Famagusta. Through a comprehensive analysis of survey data, it seeks to understand the factors that promote or hinder social cohesion, with the ultimate goal of offering recommendations that can help enhance integration efforts, reduce inequality, and strengthen community ties. By doing so, this report contributes to the broader mission of fostering cohesive, inclusive, and resilient societies across Europe.

## 1.2 Introduction to the Research

This research aims to explore the dimensions of social cohesion within local communities, specifically focusing on marginalized groups such as migrants, asylum seekers, and other third-country nationals in the districts of Limassol and Famagusta, Cyprus. Social cohesion is a critical factor in fostering integration, reducing discrimination, and ensuring equal access to social and economic opportunities for all residents. The study investigates the following central themes related to social relationships, community cohesion, labor market flexibility, access to education, housing, political participation, anti-discrimination policies and equity, and conflict resolution.

## 1.3 Objectives

The research has been designed with the following objectives:

- Understand the interaction levels among foreign-born residents and local communities.
- Examine perceptions about foreign-born residents' access to the labor market, education, health, and social services.
- Assess the level of political participation and representation of foreign-born residents at the local level.
- Evaluate the awareness and effectiveness of anti-discrimination policies.
- Measure local progress toward equality, integration, and social cohesion.
- Provide insights for policymakers and stakeholders to enhance social cohesion efforts.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Participants/Sample

The study was conducted across the Limassol and Famagusta districts, with a sample of 374 respondents. Limassol's sample comprised 257 participants and Famagusta had 115 participants. Two-thirds of the respondents in each district were non-Cypriot residents, focusing on various immigration statuses, including regular and irregular immigrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and foreign-born students.

The study collected data through in-person internet surveys, providing tablets to participants to complete web-based questionnaires. Data collection locations were chosen to ensure representation from diverse population segments. For instance, in

Limassol, surveys were conducted at the Limassol Pier (*Molos*) and Flea Market, while in Famagusta, key locations included Paralimni Town Square and Deryneia's Amphitheater and park.

## 2.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire addressed the following themes related to social cohesion:

- **Social Relationships:** Respect for diversity, welcoming new arrivals, and interaction with diverse cultures.
- **Community Cohesion:** Awareness of community spaces and promotion of positive attitudes.
- **Labor Market Flexibility:** Openness to hiring foreign-born residents and support for foreign entrepreneurs.
- **Education:** Access to education and cultural respect in schools.
- **Housing and Neighborhoods:** Equal access to housing and enjoyment of culturally diverse neighborhoods.
- **Political Participation:** Trust in local leaders and comfort with foreign-born decision-making.
- **Anti-Discrimination and Equity:** Equal treatment and support for discrimination victims.
- **Mediation and Conflict Resolution:** Need for mediation services and fair treatment by local police.

## 3. Limassol District

- **Place of Residence:** The majority of Limassol's participants live in urban areas (73.4%), indicating an urbanized community. This urban concentration is likely associated with higher levels of interaction with diverse cultures and more awareness of community services.
- **Perception of Diversity:** 52.6% of Limassol respondents agree that people respect and value diversity, which suggests a generally positive view of inclusivity in the district. However, about 30% disagreed and 16.3% were neutral.
- **Trust in Community Support:** 55.9% of participants trust that their local community will come together to support those in need, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion, reflecting a relatively cohesive community.

- **Welcoming of new arrivals:** half of the participants agree that their local community welcomes new arrivals easily, while the other half either disagrees or remains neutral on this issue. This indicates a divide in perception when it comes to how open and welcoming the local communities are toward newcomers.
- **Interaction with Different Cultures:** 70% of participants reported regularly interacting with people from various cultures, with 20.4% strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a high level of cross-cultural engagement among residents, reflecting a socially cohesive environment where individuals frequently connect with people of different nationalities, ethnicities, and religions. However, the percentage who do not engage in such interactions may indicate a segment of the population that remains more isolated.
- **Awareness of Community Spaces:** 60% of participants are aware that their municipality provides spaces accessible to all members of the community, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. However, around 7% of participants stated complete ignorance of such spaces.
- **Promotion of Positive Attitudes by the Municipality:** A little over half (53.8%) of participants reported noticing that their municipality promotes positive attitudes toward local residents of diverse nationalities, ethnicities, and religions. Meanwhile, 16.3% remained neutral, and 23.7% stated that they have not noticed such promotion. This data suggests that while there is a majority who recognize the municipality's efforts to foster positive attitudes toward diversity, a significant portion either remains unaware or feels that such efforts are insufficient.
- **Employment:** A majority of participants (62.4%) agreed that employers in their district are open to hiring foreign-born residents, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. Of these, 15.5% strongly agreed. However, 19.5% disagreed, indicating that there is still a significant portion of the population that perceives barriers to employment for foreign-born residents.
- **Economic Participation:** 61.2% of participants believe the local economy would benefit from foreign-born entrepreneurs, with a sizable 16.7% strongly supporting this view. This suggests that many participants see the inclusion of foreign-born business owners as a positive force for economic growth and diversity in the local economy.
- **Education Access:** A strong 68.6% of participants support making it easier for foreign-born residents to access the education system. However, 16.7% of participants do not support this initiative, which could signal a potential issue in community attitudes towards educational inclusivity.
- **Role of Education for Respecting Diversity:** Nearly 70% of participants recognize the importance of education in fostering respect for diversity and different cultures. However, a notable 16.7% do not see this role for education,



mirroring the percentage that does not support easier access to the education system for foreign-born residents. This parallel suggests that a segment of the population may harbor reservations about the role of education in promoting inclusivity and diversity.

- **Equal access to housing benefits:** 41.7% of participants agree that the state provides equal access to housing benefits for low-income individuals and families, regardless of their nationality and ethnicity. However, a close percentage—35.6%—disagree, indicating significant perception differences regarding the availability and fairness of housing opportunities across different demographics.
- **Living in culturally diverse neighborhoods:** A substantial majority, 70%, state that they either currently enjoy or feel they would enjoy living in a culturally diverse neighborhood. This reflects a positive attitude towards multicultural environments and suggests that many residents value diversity within their communities.
- **Trust in leadership:** 46.5% of participants agree that local community leaders have the best interests of everyone in mind, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or religion. However, 22.4% remain neutral, indicating that a sizable portion of respondents neither fully trusts nor distrusts local leadership on matters of inclusivity. This shows that while there is a moderate level of trust in leadership, a significant number of participants are uncertain.
- **Community Involvement and Equal Treatment:** A majority of 64.1% of participants agree that they would feel comfortable with foreign-born residents being involved in making decisions about the local community. However, 21.2% disagree, indicating a level of hesitation about fully integrating foreign-born individuals into the decision-making process. 73.1% of participants believe it is important that everyone in the municipality is treated equally, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. However, around 20% disagree with this, suggesting that a notable portion of the population perceives unequal treatment or does not prioritize equal treatment for all.
- **Mediation, Conflict Resolution, and Fair Treatment:** Nearly 70% of participants believe that their municipality should provide mediation services to help resolve disputes and potential conflicts between neighbors. This indicates strong support for structured mechanisms to address community disputes and foster peaceful coexistence. On the other hand, only 42.9% of participants feel that local police officers treat people equally and fairly, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. This relatively low level of trust in police fairness highlights a significant area of concern in terms of perceived equality and justice within the community. These results suggest that while there is a general desire for formal conflict resolution mechanisms, there is less confidence in the fairness of existing law enforcement practices.

## 4. Famagusta District

- **Perception of Diversity:** A majority of 61.6% of respondents in Famagusta believe that their community respects and values diversity. However, a significant portion, approximately 30%, disagreed with this view, suggesting a notable divide in opinions on the community's attitude towards diversity.
- **Trust in Community Support:** A solid majority, 64.3%, of participants express trust that their local community will come together to support those in need, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. However, 15.2% remain neutral on the issue, and 17% disagree, indicating that a portion of the population may lack confidence in the community's ability to support all its members.
- **Welcoming of new arrivals:** 48.2% of participants agree that the local community welcomes new arrivals easily. However, almost 30% of respondents disagree, indicating a significant portion of the population may not feel that newcomers are fully embraced. Additionally, an impressive 23.2% remain neutral, highlighting potential ambivalence or uncertainty regarding the community's openness to new arrivals.
- **Interaction with Different Cultures:** A strong majority of 82.2% of participants report regularly meeting and interacting with people from a wide variety of cultures, indicating high levels of cross-cultural engagement. On the other hand, 14.3% of respondents state that they do not regularly engage with people from different cultural backgrounds. This high level of interaction reflects a multicultural social environment. However, the 14.3% who do not engage in such interactions may indicate a segment of the population that remains more isolated or less involved in cross-cultural activities.
- **Awareness of Community Spaces:** 61.6% of participants are aware that their municipality provides spaces that can be used by all members of the community, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. However, a significant portion of respondents (21.4%) remained neutral on the issue, suggesting that there may be a need for better communication or promotion of these communal spaces.
- **Promotion of Positive Attitudes by the Municipality:** 46% of participants have noticed that their municipality promotes positive attitudes towards local residents of diverse nationalities, ethnicities, and/or religions. However, a substantial 27.7% remain neutral on this matter, indicating that they either do not perceive or are unsure about the municipality's efforts in this area.
- **Employment:** A strong majority, 82.1%, of participants believe that employers in their district are open to hiring foreign-born residents, with 25%



strongly agreeing. Meanwhile, 10.7% remain neutral on the subject. This data indicates a broad perception that the local job market is inclusive.

- **Economic Participation:** Almost 70% of participants believe that the local economy would benefit more if foreign-born entrepreneurs opened their own businesses in Famagusta. However, 20.6% of respondents disagree with this statement. This highlights a strong belief in the positive impact of foreign-born entrepreneurs on the local economy, though a notable minority remains skeptical, indicating a potential divide in perspectives.
- **Education Access:** A significant 74.1% of participants support making it easier for foreign-born residents to access the education system, with 23.2% strongly agreeing. In contrast, 14.3% of respondents disagree with this view. This suggests broad community backing for improving educational access for foreign-born residents, with a strong endorsement for inclusivity in the education system. However, the 14.3% that disagrees could signal a potential issue in community attitudes towards educational inclusivity, indicating room for targeted interventions or awareness campaigns to address concerns.
- **Role of Education for Respecting Diversity:** 73.3% of participants believe that it is important for schools and educational institutions to encourage respect for diversity and different cultures. However, a notable 16.9% of respondents disagree with this view. This indicates that while the majority recognizes the critical role of education in promoting diversity, the 16.9% who disagree represent a significant portion of the community. This discrepancy suggests a need for continued advocacy and education efforts to foster greater understanding and acceptance of diversity within educational environments.
- **Equal access to housing benefits:** A significant portion of the participants, 42%, feel that the state provides equal access to housing benefits for low-income individuals and families, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. However, 23.2% of respondents remain neutral on this issue, possibly indicating uncertainty or a lack of awareness about the state's housing policies. On the other hand, 28.5% of participants disagree, suggesting that a notable segment of the population believes equal access to housing benefits is not being adequately provided. This division in opinion highlights the need for policymakers to address concerns about equitable housing support and to improve awareness and transparency around these benefits.
- **Living in culturally diverse neighborhoods:** A strong majority of participants, 72.4%, state that they enjoy or feel they would enjoy living in a culturally diverse neighborhood, reflecting a positive attitude towards cultural diversity. In contrast, only 18.8% express disagreement, indicating that a smaller portion of the community may be less comfortable with living in such environments. This suggests a generally high level of openness and acceptance towards cultural diversity within neighborhoods, though there remains a minority who may have reservations

- **Trust in leadership:** 38.4% agree that local community leaders have in mind the best interests of everyone who lives in local community, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity and/or religion 22.3 disagree and we observe a high percentage 25 of neutral opinion.
- **Community Involvement and Equal Treatment:** This analysis reveals a complex picture of community perceptions regarding leadership and support. While 38.4% of participants believe that local leaders prioritize the interests of all residents regardless of their background, a notable 22.3% disagree, and 25% remain neutral, reflecting uncertainty or a lack of confidence in leadership’s inclusiveness. This division suggests that a significant portion of the population may feel disconnected or skeptical about the leadership's efforts to address the needs of diverse groups. Despite this, there is strong support for the principle of equal treatment, with 88% agreeing that everyone in the municipality should be treated equally, although 12.5% still express disagreement, highlighting lingering concerns about equity. Furthermore, 35.7% of participants believe the municipality does not offer useful support or advice to those who have faced discrimination, suggesting that more could be done to address issues of fairness and provide resources for affected individuals.
- **Mediation, Conflict Resolution, and Fair Treatment:** 76.8% of participants agree on the necessity for their municipality to provide mediation services to resolve disputes and potential conflicts between neighbors. Additionally, more than half of the participants feel that local police officers generally treat people equally and fairly, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. However, 23% of respondents hold a differing opinion, expressing concerns about the fairness and equal treatment provided by the police. This suggests that while a majority perceive fairness in police actions, a significant minority still sees room for improvement.

## 5. Comparative Analysis: Key Differences Between Limassol and Famagusta

- **Perception of Diversity:**

While both districts have a majority that values diversity, Famagusta shows a slightly stronger belief in the community's respect for diversity. However, both regions show a notable portion of the participants that disagree with this, indicating some division in perceptions of inclusivity, with Famagusta reflecting a larger consensus than Limassol.

- **Trust in Community Support:**

Famagusta participants express a higher level of trust in their community's ability to support those in need, while Limassol shows more mixed perceptions. This suggests a stronger sense of community cohesion in Famagusta, while Limassol demonstrates more hesitation or skepticism.

- **Welcoming of New Arrivals:**

Limassol and Famagusta both show divided opinions on welcoming newcomers. However, Famagusta participants are more likely to express neutrality or disagreement on this issue, suggesting a less certain or less open attitude toward new arrivals compared to Limassol.

- **Interaction with Different Cultures:**

Famagusta shows a higher level of cross-cultural interaction compared to Limassol, but in both districts, this interaction is present and significant.

- **Awareness of Community Spaces:**

Both districts show similar awareness of community spaces accessible to all. However, Famagusta has a higher percentage of participants who are neutral on this issue, indicating that there may be a need for better communication about such spaces in Famagusta compared to Limassol.

- **Promotion of Positive Attitudes by the Municipality:**

Limassol participants are slightly more aware of the municipality's efforts to promote positive attitudes toward diversity, while Famagusta residents are more likely to remain neutral or unaware. This suggests that Limassol's municipality may be more active or visible in promoting diversity initiatives.

- **Employment Opportunities for Foreign-Born Residents:**

Famagusta shows a stronger belief in the openness of employers to hiring foreign-born residents compared to Limassol. This indicates a more inclusive perception of the local job market in Famagusta.

- **Economic Participation:**

Participants in Famagusta are more optimistic about the economic benefits of foreign-born entrepreneurs than those in Limassol, where skepticism about the economic contributions of these individuals is more pronounced.

- **Education Access:**

Both districts show strong support for improving education access for foreign-born residents, though Famagusta participants are slightly more

supportive. Limassol shows more opposition to this idea, indicating a potential barrier in attitudes toward educational inclusivity.

- **Role of Education for Respecting Diversity:**

Famagusta participants place slightly more importance on the role of education in promoting respect for diversity than those in Limassol. However, in both districts, there is a small but significant group that does not see this role, reflecting reservations about the impact of education on inclusivity.

- **Equal Access to Housing Benefits:**

Both districts have mixed views on equal access to housing benefits, but Limassol participants are more likely to disagree that such benefits are provided equitably. Famagusta participants are more neutral on this issue, indicating less certainty or awareness about housing policies.

- **Living in Culturally Diverse Neighborhoods:**

Famagusta participants express a slightly stronger preference for living in culturally diverse neighborhoods compared to Limassol, reflecting a more open attitude toward multicultural environments in their communities.

- **Trust in Leadership:**

Limassol shows slightly higher trust in local leadership's inclusiveness, whereas Famagusta participants are more skeptical or uncertain. This suggests a greater confidence in leadership in Limassol, although in both districts, a significant portion of respondents remain neutral or distrustful.

- **Mediation, Conflict Resolution, and Fair Treatment:**

Both districts strongly support the need for mediation services to resolve community disputes. However, Famagusta participants show slightly more trust in the fairness of police treatment than those in Limassol, where concerns about police impartiality are more prominent.

### **Conclusion:**

Famagusta generally shows higher levels of cross-cultural engagement, inclusivity in employment, and support for foreign-born residents' participation in the local economy. In contrast, Limassol, being more urbanized, reflects a more structured but divided community, with greater concerns around employment opportunities, education access, and trust in leadership. These differences suggest that Famagusta may be more inclusive and cohesive in certain areas, while Limassol faces challenges in fostering equal opportunities and perceptions of inclusivity.

## 6. Perceptions of Social Cohesion and Inclusivity Among Cypriot Participants

A different and more critical perception of inclusivity and social cohesion emerges when considering the responses of Cypriot participants. The findings reveal a significant portion of Cypriots hold negative views on key aspects of diversity and integration within their communities.

When asked whether most people in their local community respect and value diversity, half of the Cypriots responded negatively, reflecting a strong sentiment of exclusion. This is further underscored by the fact that 45.1% believe their community lacks public solidarity and does not respect diversity. Additionally, 44% feel that their community does not easily welcome new arrivals, though 35.4% express the opposite opinion, suggesting a split in perceptions on how open their community is to newcomers.

Interaction with different cultures also presents mixed results. While just over half of the participants report regularly interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, around 15% remain neutral, indicating that a significant segment of the population may not be actively engaging with the cultural diversity around them. A little more than half are aware that their municipality provides spaces for all community members, yet 41.4% believe the municipality does not promote positive attitudes towards diverse nationalities, ethnicities, or religions, with 18.3% offering neutral responses, pointing to a lack of visibility or engagement with municipal efforts to foster inclusivity.

Employment presents a more optimistic picture, with 64.6% of Cypriot participants agreeing that employers are open to hiring foreign-born residents. However, opinions are equally divided regarding the economic benefit of foreign-born entrepreneurs, with 42.7% disagreeing and 41.5% agreeing that these businesses would benefit the local economy.

Education remains a contentious issue. A substantial 37.8% disagree with the idea of making it easier for foreign-born residents to access the education system, while 46.3% support it. Furthermore, 42.7% do not believe it is important for schools to encourage respect for diversity and different cultures, while 45.1% believe otherwise, highlighting a clear divide in attitudes toward the role of education in fostering inclusivity.

Housing and neighborhood diversity also reflect these contrasting perspectives. Over half (54.9%) of Cypriots believe that the state does not provide equal access to housing benefits for low-income individuals regardless of nationality or ethnicity, and 52.5% would not enjoy living in a culturally diverse neighborhood, suggesting a reluctance to embrace multiculturalism in their immediate living environments.

Trust in leadership and political participation reveal significant skepticism. Nearly half (47.6%) judge local community leaders negatively with respect to inclusivity, and a

substantial 54.8% would not feel comfortable with foreign-born residents being involved in local decision-making. Furthermore, 40.3% do not believe equal treatment is important in their municipality, though a slight majority (51.2%) support the principle.

Lastly, only 31.7% of Cypriot participants recognize that their municipality offers support to those who have faced discrimination, and only half support the provision of mediation services to resolve conflicts between neighbors, with 36.6% disagreeing. Similarly, only 40% believe that local police officers treat people equally and fairly, indicating a significant lack of trust in law enforcement's impartiality.

These findings suggest that Cypriot participants exhibit more skepticism and division on issues of social cohesion, diversity, and inclusivity compared to the overall sample. The responses highlight deep-rooted challenges in fostering an inclusive environment, with substantial numbers expressing dissatisfaction or uncertainty about community solidarity, integration, and fairness in their local contexts.

## 7. General Conclusion and Suggestions

This study provides important insights into the current state of social cohesion in Cyprus and more specifically in Limassol and Famagusta.

While the data indicates a general appreciation for diversity and interaction among various cultural groups, it also highlights significant areas where social cohesion could be improved. Many residents report positive experiences with cultural diversity, yet there are clear barriers to full integration. These include a lack of trust in key institutions, such as local leadership and law enforcement, unequal access to essential services like housing and education, and reluctance to involve foreign-born residents in decision-making processes.

A particularly concerning finding is the lack of trust in education, which emerges as a critical issue. Education is widely recognized as a powerful tool for fostering social integration and cohesion, but skepticism around its role in promoting respect for diversity is evident. This disconnect needs urgent attention, as a well-functioning education system that champions inclusivity is essential for breaking down the barriers to integration.

The inclusion of Cypriot perspectives adds another layer of complexity to these findings. Many Cypriot respondents expressed more critical views on inclusivity, with nearly half believing that their local community does not respect or value diversity. Furthermore, 44% of Cypriots felt that their community does not easily welcome new arrivals, and there was notable hesitation about allowing foreign-born residents greater access to education and participation in decision-making processes. For instance, 37.8% of Cypriots disagreed with making education more accessible to foreign-born residents, and 42.7% opposed the idea that schools should encourage



respect for diversity. These insights underscore that efforts to improve social cohesion must address not only the needs of foreign-born residents but also the concerns of native Cypriots, whose perspectives show a more critical stance toward inclusivity.

This divide in perception between Cypriots and foreign-born residents suggests that promoting social cohesion will require a multifaceted approach. It highlights the need to bridge gaps in understanding and address mutual concerns among all community members.

Based on the findings and general understanding of social dynamics, several key factors can contribute to improving social cohesion in a diverse community. These factors are rooted in promoting inclusion, reducing inequalities, and fostering trust and interaction between different community members. Here are some critical factors that could enhance social cohesion:

- **Enhancing Urban-Rural Connectivity:** Ensuring that rural areas like those in Famagusta have access to the same services and community initiatives as urban areas will be critical. This could increase interaction and trust between diverse groups.
- **Promoting Cultural Engagement:** Creating spaces and events that encourage interaction between different cultural groups will improve relationships and understanding within communities. Both districts reflect the need for greater cultural interaction, but Limassol, with its higher urbanization and frequent cross-cultural engagement, serves as a model for how cultural interactions can thrive in a more densely populated area.
- **Improving Awareness of Anti-Discrimination Policies:** The data highlights that many participants either lack awareness of or do not perceive strong anti-discrimination policies within their municipalities. This gap in perception suggests the need for more visible and proactive measures to combat discrimination, especially against foreign-born residents. Educational campaigns should be launched to increase public awareness of existing policies and resources for individuals facing discrimination. Workshops, seminars, and media campaigns could be used to inform both the public and employers about legal rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, strengthening and publicizing enforcement mechanisms, such as mediation services, can assure residents that discrimination is not tolerated.
- **Encouraging Political Participation:** One of the key findings is the need for greater political participation among foreign-born residents, who often feel excluded from local decision-making processes. This exclusion can foster feelings of disenfranchisement and hinder social cohesion. By actively promoting political participation, local governments can make foreign-born residents feel more valued and integrated into the community. This could include creating advisory councils that represent diverse ethnic and cultural groups, offering information sessions on how foreign-born residents can

participate in local elections, and encouraging civic engagement through volunteer opportunities or local town halls.

- **Expanding Education on Diversity:** Schools and educational institutions play a pivotal role in shaping social cohesion. The data shows that while many participants recognize the importance of education in fostering respect for diversity, a significant minority remains skeptical. To bridge this gap, schools should implement more comprehensive curricula that focus on intercultural competencies, the history and contributions of various ethnic groups, and the value of diversity in building a thriving society. Beyond formal education, extracurricular activities that promote interaction across cultural groups should be encouraged, such as sports teams, arts programs, and volunteer initiatives that bring students from diverse backgrounds together. This early exposure to diversity can help cultivate open-mindedness and mutual respect among younger generations, laying the groundwork for more cohesive communities in the future.
- **Building Trust in Local Leadership and Law Enforcement:** Trust in local leadership and law enforcement is essential for social cohesion. While many participants in both districts expressed trust in their leaders, a notable percentage were either skeptical or neutral. Cypriot respondents, in particular, demonstrated lower levels of trust in community leaders, with many feeling that local leaders do not prioritize inclusiveness. To improve this, local governments should take steps to enhance transparency and accountability, ensuring that all community members feel that their voices are heard. Public forums, regular reports on community progress, and open lines of communication between leaders and residents can foster a more inclusive decision-making process. Additionally, training programs for local police to ensure fair treatment of all residents, regardless of nationality or ethnicity, can help rebuild trust in law enforcement and promote a sense of justice and equality within the community.

## 8. Social Cohesion Monitoring Toolkit Scoring System

The Social Cohesion Monitoring Toolkit Scoring System provides a comprehensive approach to evaluating social cohesion across various themes relevant to Cyprus. It employs a series of indicators that measure different dimensions of social integration, inclusion, and equality, offering a way to assess current policies and identify areas of improvement.

### Results Overview:

The following scores reflect Cyprus' performance across the various themes of the toolkit:

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| Theme 1  | 0.61 |
| Theme 2  | 0.59 |
| Theme 3  | 0.66 |
| Theme 4  | 0.70 |
| Theme 6  | 0.59 |
| Theme 7  | 0.60 |
| Theme 8  | 0.64 |
| Theme 10 | 0.62 |

Overall Index Score: 0.63

This overall score of 0.63 reflects Cyprus' moderate progress towards achieving a high level of social cohesion. While several areas show promise, particularly in Theme 4 with a score of 0.70, other themes like Theme 2 and Theme 6 suggest there is room for improvement. These insights highlight areas where policies and community efforts may need to be strengthened to foster a more cohesive and inclusive society.