

A collage of images in the background, including wind turbines, classical Greek statues, a flag, and a protest with the Greek word 'ΘΕΡΑ' (Thera) visible on a sign.

Hellenic Observatory Centre

for Research
on Contemporary
Greece and Cyprus



The Hellenic Observatory is changing

As I assume my position as the third Eleftherios Venizelos Chair of Contemporary Greek Studies at the London School of Economics, I have the privilege to have been entrusted with the Directorship of the new LSE Centre for Research on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus—which is the new name of the Hellenic Observatory. The establishment of such a centre—uniquely in LSE for its geographical focus, and perhaps globally for its focus on contemporary Greece and Cyprus—has been to a large extent the outcome of the outstanding efforts of my predecessor, Professor Kevin Featherstone, and the HO team of which I have had the privilege of being part of for the last 20 years; as well as of the invaluable support of our individual and institutional donors some of which have been supporting our journey from our very start back in 1996.

In its 28-year history, the Hellenic Observatory has achieved a lot. Maintaining always a fine balance between policy-embeddedness and arm's length relations with sources of financial and political power, we have produced, nurtured, supported, and disseminated topical, academically rigorous and policy-relevant research—contributing systematically to public and policy debates, advancing issues of relevance to Greece and Cyprus in the UK and bringing grounded and dependable analysis to users of academic and policy research 'back home'. In doing so, we have also supported and nurtured dozens of scholars through our teaching, scholarships, fellowships, research appointments, grants, and doctoral workshops, many of whom now hold leading positions in academia and policy, both in Greece/Cyprus and internationally.

Under my leadership, the new Hellenic Observatory Centre for Research on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus will develop further: expanding its disciplinary and thematic focus to look more closely at issues of society, identity and private enterprise; engaging a larger team of LSE academics with distinguished careers in their fields and drawing on the expertise of various colleagues outside LSE who will be joining us as Associates; pursuing research agendas that not only analyse the two countries but also use them as cases to inform analytical debates in the international literature; and, inversely, drawing from these debates to influence domestic policy and practice; and, last but not least, stepping up our public engagement efforts, with new series of public lectures, policy conferences, academic workshops and seminars, and new collaborations with academic institutions and knowledge-users from policy, business and civil society.

In these pages you can find an overview of our new membership, our organisational structure and our thematic priorities. I welcome you all to the new phase of the Hellenic Observatory's journey!

Professor Vassilis Monastiriotis

Eleftherios Venizelos Chair of Contemporary Greek Studies and Professor of Political Economy; Director, Hellenic Observatory Centre for Research on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus

Centre for Research on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus

Research Clusters

As a Centre, the Hellenic Observatory will host a significantly larger team of researchers. Alongside a core team of LSE academics, joining us from many departments—from Statistics and Finance to Social Policy and Media & Communications—the new Centre will be home to a range of LSE-based Affiliates and external Associates, both from across the UK and from Greece and Cyprus. To facilitate this expansion, we are establishing three research clusters along broad disciplinary lines, each led by a pair of LSE academics with significant expertise in the demarcated area.

Politics & Geopolitics



Co-ordinated by Professor **Kevin Featherstone** (Hellenic Observatory Centre) and Dr **Spyros Economides** (European Institute), this cluster brings together researchers from the fields of politics, political science and international relations, as well as from related fields such as security studies, law, public administration, history and others. Some projects currently developing within this cluster include work on Prime Ministers' crisis management, institutionalisation of evidence-informed policymaking, poly-crises and political trust, regional inequalities and political discontent, and Greece and Cyprus as 'small state' foreign policy actors.



Society, Identity & Rights



Co-ordinated by Professor **Lillie Chouliaraki** (Department of Media & Communications) and Dr **Leonidas Cheliotis** (Department of Social Policy), this cluster introduces a new area of research in the Hellenic Observatory. Our work will initially cover a narrower set of topics focusing, in the first instance, on issues of gender-based violence with a project on media discourses of femicides, and on issues of perceptions and identity with a study on entrepreneurs working across ethnic lines in Cyprus. Further work will be developed prospectively with projects focusing on rights, civic participation, and migration.



Economy & Public Policy



Co-ordinated by Professor **Dimitri Vayanos** (Department of Finance) and Dr **Eleni Karagiannaki** (CASE), this is the largest of our clusters. A main area of research here concerns Greece's growth strategy towards addressing problems of capital misallocation and adverse incentives (strategic investments and industrial policy) and challenges of sustainability, demography, and climate risks (green and digital transition). Other areas include work on the labour market (occupational segregation, skill shortages and brain drain, minimum wages and 'good jobs'); corporate governance and business adaptation to change; health and education reforms; income inequalities and housing affordability.



Quite distinctively, the new Hellenic Observatory Centre will also house LSE's **Research Group on Southeast Europe (LSEE)**, led by Professor **Denisa Kostovicova**. Our work with LSEE will cover the Balkans, Turkey, and the Eastern Mediterranean, reflecting our ongoing interest in the broader region that includes Greece and Cyprus. By bringing together and further developing the School's expertise on Southeast Europe, the group aims to provide a significant platform for high-quality and independent research, facilitate public dialogue, and disseminate information and research findings about the region.

Research Themes

While much of our research, as well as our policy and public engagement work, will naturally be organised within our disciplinary clusters, at the same time we will work in a more cross-disciplinary fashion on three main thematic areas that form our strategic priorities for the period 2024-2027.

Gender The question of gender relationships and gender stereotypes has come to the fore recently owing to the distressing statistics and news emerging about femicides and domestic violence in Greece, Cyprus, and globally. This thematic priority will seek to examine, and call attention to, the position of women in Greece and Cyprus from various disciplinary and cross-disciplinary angles, both domestically and in a comparative perspective. Besides our current project on media discourses on femicides in Greece, we are developing projects on gender-based occupational segregation, the position of women in Greek politics, everyday sexism, and attitudes towards domestic violence against women, intra-household inequality, female poverty, and others.

Growth Despite Greece's impressive exit from the crisis, the Greek economy suffers from significant legacy problems of industrial structure and the strategic orientation of its economy. The same argument can be made for Cyprus, especially after the eruption of the war in Ukraine that destabilised the country's (over)reliance on Russian capital. Our priorities in this area will focus on issues of industrial policy and competitiveness/productivity, including projects on Greece's recovery plan (Greece 2.0), the strategic investments framework, productivity and capital misallocation, and problems of demography and sustainability, among others. Particular attention will be placed on Greece's and Cyprus's adaptation efforts under the twin transition—green and digital—with prospective projects looking at industrial energy consumption shifts and the development of digital finance in the two countries. Other aspects of economy and governance, such as labour market reforms, health and education policy will also contribute to this field.

Citizenship Greek and Cypriot society has arguably many elements of traditionalism (informality, clientelism, family-based solidarity) affecting people's perceptions of and attitudes towards a series of issues, from questions of 'profit' and 'career' to questions of social solidarity, civic engagement and the role of the State in serving its citizens. The modernisation and integration of their economies have put strain on this more traditionalist social edifice. In this research theme, we want to encourage and facilitate research that will address the drivers and implications of societal attitudes towards civic engagement, social solidarity, migration, the State (e.g., the notion of 'tax-paying citizen') and cultural minorities—also in relation to religious and gender-identity issues. Prospective projects within this theme include analyses of the impact of recent crises and 'polycrises' on people's preferences and trust to political and other institutions; identity formation within and against diasporic communities; attitudes towards the rights of cultural and ethnic minorities; and questions of meritocracy and the provision of public and social welfare services.



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Photography by the artists of the 'Imagine Greece' exhibition – LSE, 2016

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