



Avgi Chrysostomou -Lapathiotis

Director, Financial Services Directorate &
Deputy Economic Director Public Debt Management Office,
Ministry of Finance, Cyprus

Speech

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Ministers and
Governors,

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a real pleasure to welcome
you this evening to what was
meant to be our Gala Dinner in
Nicosia and which, even online,
remains an important moment of
reflection and connection.

While we may not be gathered
around the same table, this
occasion still brings together
those who shape Europe's
financial future. And that, in itself,
matters. Because leadership in
Europe today is not about form it
is about substance, direction and
follow through.

Let me begin by thanking EUROFI,
its Chair David Wright, and the
entire EUROFI team for their long
standing contribution as Europe's
established and fruitful forum
for financial debate. EUROFI
has consistently provided a
space where difficult issues are
addressed openly, where public
and private perspectives meet,
and where ideas are constructively
challenged and tested against
reality. In an economically
and geopolitically uncertain
environment, this role is more
valuable than ever.

This year's discussions take place
at a moment when Europe can no
longer afford delays.

We face increasing geopolitical
pressure, now also affecting
energy supply—hence the driving
force of the real economy—,
technological transformation

challenges, climate risk,
demographic ageing and fiscal
constraints all at the same time.
The conclusion is unavoidable:
Europe must invest more, invest
better, and invest faster.

And this leads me to a central
message that has emerged
repeatedly during this seminar:

Europe is not short of savings.

Europe needs to enhance the
financial system's capability
to connect those savings with
productive, long term investments
within Europe.

The majority of European capital
remains parked in low yield
instruments or invested outside
the Union, while European
businesses—particularly
innovative firms and SMEs—
struggle to access liquidity,
in particular long-term and
professionally managed, risk
capital. This is not a marginal
inefficiency. It is a structural
weakness, and rectifying it is a
strategic responsibility.

This is why the Savings and
Investments Union is not just
another policy initiative. It is a
cornerstone of enhancing Europe's
competitiveness, resilience and
strategic autonomy—and a clear
priority of the Cyprus Presidency.

Our message as Presidency is
straightforward:

Europe does not need more
diagnoses. It needs swift
implementation.

It needs simpler rules, less
administrative burden for
incumbents and less market

fragmentation, hence less
costs, more scale, and greater
trust in reforms enhancing the
competitiveness of European
economy—for investors, for firms
and for citizens.

From Cyprus's perspective, this
agenda is both European and
deeply practical.

As a small, but open economy, we
know that fragmentation imposes
additional costs, while integration
creates synergies and economies
of scale, hence reduction of
costs and opening towards
yield-bringing opportunities. We
know that access to financing,
to markets and to investments
is decisive—not in theory, but in
everyday economic reality.

But integration will not happen
by itself. It requires political
will, institutional cooperation,
and a shared understanding
that Europe's financial strength
depends on collective solutions,
not 27 parallel ones.

Trust lies at the heart of this
effort.

Trust between Member States.

Trust between supervisors and
markets.

And trust from the citizens site to
the financial system.

That trust is earned through
consistency, predictability and
delivery. And this is precisely
where forums like EUROFI play a
critical role: by helping turn broad
agreement into concrete progress.

This evening, I would also like to
underline one fundamental point.

Beyond all frameworks and acronyms, financial policy serves people.

It serves households planning for the future.

It serves Entrepreneurs setting up, businesses and attracting financing to develop them.

It serves sound investment practices, investor protection and financial stability. And societies navigating profound transitions.

If financial policy fails to deliver tangible results for them, it fails in its purpose.

EUROFI matters because it keeps this perspective at the centre of the debate and because it challenges us, as policymakers, to match ambition with action.

Let me conclude on behalf of the Cyprus Presidency.

Although we regret not being able to welcome you physically to Nicosia, our commitment to advancing Europe's financial agenda is undiminished. We intend to use the Presidency period to push for progress, to build bridges, and to deliver where consensus exists.

In Cyprus, we say that hospitality is not a gesture—it is an obligation of the heart.

Even at a distance, that spirit of *filoxenia*—openness, respect and dialogue—guides how we engage with our European partners.

Cyprus has always been a meeting point: of Continents, of ideas and of people.

And it is in this spirit that we approach Europe's financial challenges today with confidence, with realism, and with a clear sense of responsibility.

I thank you for your engagement, your contributions and your willingness to move the discussion forward.

I wish you a very pleasant evening—wherever you are—and continued productive exchanges.

Thank you, and καλό σας βράδυ.