

The Great Britain-Cyprus *Business Gazette*



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Cyprus's economy sees growth slowdown to 2.1 per cent in second quarter

The Cypriot economy experienced a notable deceleration in its growth rate during the second quarter of 2023, with GDP growth slowing to 2.1 per cent compared to the same period in 2022.

This marks a significant slowdown from the 3.1 per cent growth recorded in the first quarter of the current year and the 4.6 per cent growth in the fourth quarter of 2022 on an annual basis, according to a report released on Friday. (Page 18)

13 lenders cut mortgage rates as experts say we could be seeing beginnings of a rates war

Mortgage experts welcomed the news as evidence that the crisis may be turning a corner, but warned that rates are unlikely to return to the lows seen earlier this year. At least 13 lenders out of 82 are set to reduce mortgage rates this week, offering tentative signs that pressure on homeowners may be beginning to ease as competition returns to the market. (Page 10)



Upcoming International Business Conference: Business Orientation Cyprus 2023 plus UK Finance, Real Estate & Other Investment Opportunities

The Great Britain-Cyprus Business Association Cyprus in association with QUANTUMA are organising an International Business Conference, on Monday, 13 November 2023 at London Marriott Hotel, Regents Park.

25 speakers/panelists, from Cyprus and the UK, will participate. More than 120 delegates are expected to attend. Mr George Papanastasiou, Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Cyprus will be the main speaker. The event is under the auspices of the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For more information and to REGISTER TO ATTEND, please visit www.gbcy.business/events (Page 6)



A Landmark Achievement: Infocredit Group's Joint Venture, Malta Credit Bureau Limited, Licensed as CRA Credit Reference Agency (CRA)

Infocredit Group, in collaboration with the Malta Association of Credit Management, is thrilled to announce that their joint venture, Malta Credit Bureau Limited, has successfully obtained a license to function as a credit reference agency (CRA) in Malta. This momentous achievement marks a new era in the region's credit assessment and risk management. (Page 28)



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- Financial Consultants International
- P. Kalopetrides & Co.
- Consulco.

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- The e-newspaper is also available on www.gbcy.business/e-newspaper
- Presentations and articles are also available on www.gbcy.business/copy-of-e-newspaper in Digital Form

Editorial

By Savvas Kyriakides, Founder & President of the Great Britain-Cyprus Business Association



Register to attend the upcoming International Business Conference on 13 November in London

Great Britain - Cyprus Business Association in association with QUANTUMA, are very proud to organise the International Business Conference, Business Orientation Cyprus 2023, plus UK Finance, Real Estate & Other Investment Opportunities, on 13 November at London Marriott Hotel, Regents Park.

Mr George Papnastasiou, Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Cyprus will be the Main Speaker. Mr Marios Tannousis, CEO of Invest Cyprus is a Guest speaker. More than 25 distinguished speakers and panelists from the UK and Cyprus will also be there with us to update us about the Investment opportunities in Cyprus and the UK.

The primary purpose is to update all the interested professionals, businessmen, investors and other individuals based in the UK but also in other countries worldwide, about investment opportunities in Cyprus.

A panel of distinguished speakers from the UK will also participate to provide us with priceless information regarding investment opportunities in the UK and the UK market in general.

This International Business Conference will provide the opportunity for professional people such as lawyers, accountants, economists, financial consultants as well as property developers and real estate agents to present their services and projects. This event is also a priceless business networking experience, where our delegates may benefit from the acquaintances that they make.

Furthermore, our exhibitors can meet with investment migrants, prospective luxury real estate buyers, wealthy individuals, consultants, and other delegates, they can do business together.

A big thank you to all our speakers and sponsors who will join me on 13 November and provide you with all this interesting information about investment opportunities in Cyprus and also in the UK.



If you are interested in grabbing this opportunity, please visit www.gbcy.business/events now and register to attend this upcoming International Business Conference.



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Great Britain-Cyprus Business Association
in association with Quantuma

presents

**INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE
BUSINESS ORIENTATION CYPRUS 2023**

Plus: An update on UK Economy and UK Investment opportunities



A conference for the true investor

London 13 November 2023

VENUE: Marriott Regents Park Hotel, 128 King Henry's Road, London NW3 3ST

This event is under the auspices of the government of the Republic of Cyprus



AREAS OF DISCUSSION

1. Relocating your business to Cyprus
2. Cyprus: An emerging Investment Fund Centre in Europe
3. Real Estate: Investment Opportunities in Cyprus
4. Cyprus as a Tech hub
5. Other Investment opportunities in Cyprus
6. London: Real Estate Investment
7. UK Real Estate Finance
8. UK - Other Investment opportunities



For more information
www.gbcy.business/events

Or send us an email to:
info@gbcy.business
Tel: +44 (0) 78 509 44368

PROPOSED AGENDA

8.45 a.m. – 9.30 a.m. Registration

9.30 a.m.

Opening speech by Savvas Kyriakides, Founder & President of the Great Britain-Cyprus Business Association

9.35 a.m.

Welcome Remarks by the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

9.40 a.m.

Speech by the Main speaker, Mr. George Papanastasiou, Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry of the government of the Republic of Cyprus

PART A - Cyprus: The success story

10.00 a.m. – 10.40 a.m.

Panel 1: Cyprus as a Rising Force of the Financial Services

- How Cyprus can achieve financial growth in these challenging times
- ESG and the Future of Financial Services

10.40 a.m. – 11.20 a.m.

Panel 2: Cyprus – The Success Story and Strategy

- Collaboration with Israel and other countries
- Permanent Residency Permit
- Other reasons

11.20 a.m. – 11.45 a.m.

Coffee Break

PART B - London: Real Estate Investment & Finance

11.45 a.m. – 11.55 a.m.

Investing in the U.K. – Speaker to be confirmed

11.55 a.m. – 12.40 p.m.

Panel 3: London – A Global Financial & Real Estate Investment Centre

- London Real Estate Challenges and Opportunities
- Real Estate Finance
- Collaboration with Cyprus Banking Sector

12.40 p.m. – 1.05 p.m.

Coffee Break

PART C – Why Invest in Cyprus

1.05 p.m. – 1.45 p.m.

Panel 4: Technology & Innovation

1.45 p.m. – 2.30 p.m.

Panel 5: Real Estate & Other Investment opportunities in Cyprus

2.30 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.

Lunch & networking opportunities

MAIN SPEAKER

BUSINESS ORIENTATION CYPRUS 2023

Plus: An update on UK Economy and UK Investment Opportunities
London, 13 November 2023

George Papanastasiou

Minister of Energy Commerce and Industry



To register to attend, please visit www.gbcy.business/events



13 lenders cut mortgage rates as experts say we could be seeing beginnings of a rates war

Mortgage experts welcomed the news as evidence that the crisis may be turning a corner, but warned that rates are unlikely to return to the lows seen earlier this year.

At least 13 lenders out of 82 are set to reduce mortgage rates this week, offering tentative signs that pressure on homeowners may be beginning to ease as competition returns to the market.

Halifax, the UK's largest mortgage lender, reduced rates by up to 0.71 percentage points from Friday, 11 August, with a five-year fixed deal priced at 5.39 per cent, down from 6.10 per cent.

NatWest has followed suit, announcing it will also reduce selected two and five-year fixed rates by up to 0.65 percentage points from the same day.

HSBC, Nationwide and TSB already cut rates a few days earlier, after the latest data on inflation was better than expected, despite the Bank of England raising the base interest rate for a 14th successive time a week earlier.

Mortgage experts welcomed the news as evidence that the crisis may be turning a corner, but warned that rates are unlikely to return to the lows seen earlier this year.

David Hollingworth, of L&C mortgages, told: "We are seeing the beginnings of a rates war. There is tougher competition in the market."

The average two-year fixed rate is currently 6.83 per cent, while in January it sat at 5.5 per cent. In the eight months in between, the Bank of England has upped the base interest rate from 3.5 per cent to 5.25 per cent.



Mr Hollingworth said the market had priced-in the Bank's latest hike before it occurred, allowing lenders to offer competitive rates as inflation fell from 8.7 per cent in May to 7.9 per cent in June.

As more lenders came forward to announce sharp cuts to rates on some of their fixed mortgage deals, he said "it certainly looks that mortgage rates have turned a corner".

"The inflation data last month has seen the expected peak for base rate ease back which has reduced the outlook for rates and gives room for lenders to cut their fixed rates.

"That doesn't mean that the base rate won't rise further but the market has already priced that in, which is why there was barely a ripple when the Bank increased base rate again this month.

"As a result, it looks like the direction of travel for fixed rates now will be a gradual reduction unless there is some data that changes that outlook. Lenders are now longer dealing with the extremely volatile markets and so will be able to concentrate on competing on rate.

"The more that lenders begin to push rates down the more likely it is that others will follow suit."

Brokers are issuing caution however. The news comes after i revealed that households on fixed-rate mortgages set to come to an end in 2023 still face paying thousands more every year for new long-term deals.

There are around 800,000 fixed-rate deals ending in the second half of 2023. Around 1.6 million deals are due to end in 2024.

"Although this will be very welcome news for borrowers it isn't likely to see rates return back to the much lower rates of even earlier this year," Mr Hollingworth said.

"All eyes will be on the inflation data next week and the hope that the easing will continue so as not to destabilise these rate improvements."

Aaron Strutt, product and communications manager at Trinity Financial, said: “I am not sure we are in a price war territory yet, though the lenders understand something has to happen to get some life back into the mortgage and property markets again.”

The other lenders to announce a drop in rates on selected fixed mortgages are Skipton Building Society, Principality Building Society, First Direct, Nottingham Building Society, Newcastle Building Society, Furness, Leek Building Society, MPowered.

Mark Harris, chief executive of mortgage broker SPF Private Clients, said the reductions were down to the stability of swap rates – the rates at which banks lend money to each other – which heavily influence mortgage rates.

Banks usually pass on the cost of increasing swap rates to mortgage borrowers so that their lending continues to make them money, meaning fixed-rate deals tend to rise.

Mr Harris said: “The relative stability in swap rates, which underpin the pricing of fixed-rate mortgages, has given a growing number of lenders confidence as to where they can price their products.

“Those who have made reductions to their rates should be applauded for doing so and hopefully those who haven’t, will follow soon.

“While mortgage rates are falling now, no one has a crystal ball. In the short term, rates could reprice higher as lenders temper demand for their products. However, the money markets expect that in the medium term, interest rates will fall from they are now.

“With two more sets of inflation and employment data due before the next scheduled Monetary Policy Committee meeting, much can change and quickly as we have already seen.

“For example, while inflation has fallen in part due to food prices and fuel, should OPEC cut production further or there be a shortage of Ukrainian grain, those inflationary pressures could return pretty swiftly.”

Chris Sykes, of Private Finance, said that confidence in swap rates had given lenders an incentive to pass cost savings onto borrowers in order to make their products more competitive.

He told i: “More lenders are likely to follow this trend, and we may even see further rate reductions from those lenders who have already lowered rates – the margin against swaps still remains comparatively quite high. As one would expect with most price movements, we have noticed lenders are slower to decrease rates than they were to increase these.”

He added: “In terms of turning a corner, we could well have done yes, as long as we don’t get any other major economic surprises. We are likely to see other lenders follow suit in the coming weeks and from the lenders who have just dropped rates we could even see other slight reductions as there is still a fair margin vs swaps at the moment.

“This means that if you have applied for a fixed rate mortgage in the last month or so, it is likely worth a review to see if rates have improved since and anything better can be locked in.”

While the long-awaited fall in rates offers hope, successive rises over the last year have already left swathes of mortgage holders with unmanageable monthly payments.

Households on tracker deals have seen their rates rise time and time again, with last week’s rise adding up to £285 per year to the average monthly payment.

Thousands of households on fixed-rate mortgages could face an annual rise of up to £5,570 on their payments when their deal ends this year, according to recent data.

Among those will be households with five-year fixed deals that were subject to an average interest rate of 2.18 per cent in December 2018.

If those households took out another five-year deal when their current agreement ends, they would pay an average rate of 5.85 per cent meaning they would pay almost £4,900 extra a year.

HOW MUCH COULD YOU SAVE?

Halifax

Halifax is now offering a five-year fixed deal at 5.39 per cent, down from 6.10 per cent.

On a 25-year-term £200,000 mortgage, this would mean monthly payments would fall from £1,300 to £1,216 – a saving of £84.

Natwest

Natwest is offering reductions of up to 0.65 per cent on selected mortgages for new customers, including a five-year fix at 5.63 per cent.

On a 25-year-term £200,000 mortgage, this rate would mean monthly payments of £1,244.

Before a 0.65 per cent drop, this would have cost £1,323 – giving a monthly saving of £79.

HSBC

HSBC is offering rate cuts on selected two, three and five-year fixed rate products of up to 0.35 percentage points.

A five-year fix for remortgage is being offered at 5.49 per cent. On a 25-year-term £200,000 mortgage this rate would mean monthly payments of £1,227.

Before a 0.35 per cent drop, this would have cost £1,269 – giving a monthly saving of £42.

TSB

TSB is offering reductions of up to 0.4 percentage points on selected five-year fixed mortgages, with rates starting from 5.44 per cent.

On a 25-year-term £200,000 mortgage, this rate would mean monthly payments of £1,221.

Before a 0.4 per cent drop, this would have cost £1,269 – giving a monthly saving of £48.

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Inflation falls to 6.8% in July - mostly driven by lower energy prices

The fall raises hopes the worst of the cost of living crisis may be over

The rate of inflation fell sharply last month raising hopes that the worst of the cost of living crisis may be over. The headline measure of inflation - the Consumer Price Index (CPI) - dropped to 6.8 per cent in July, down from 7.9 per cent in June, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

It means prices are now rising at their slowest rate since February 2022 when inflation was 6.2 per cent. Crucially they are also going up less quickly than wages meaning that most people are getting better off for the first time since October 2021. On Tuesday the ONS revealed that average basic pay surged by a record 7.8 per cent in the three months to June.

The sharp fall will also ease the pressure on the Bank of England to continue hiking interest rates though at least one more increase is expected next month when the cost of borrowing is likely to be raised from 5.25 per cent to 5.5 per cent.

Inflation has been slowly easing since it peaked at 11.1 per cent last October propelled by rocketing energy prices after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. That in turn pushed up the price of most other everyday items, including food and drink.

Recent figure covers the month when average annual household energy bills fell from the £2,500 level of the Government's Energy Price Guarantee to the £2,074 of regulator Ofgem's latest energy bill cap.

The data from the ONS shows gas bills fell 25.2 per cent between June and July, while electricity bills are 8.6 per cent lower. The fall in the CPI was also driven by slower food and drink price rises. They rose by 14.9 per cent the slowest since September 2022.

The July inflation figure - as measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI) - is normally used as a peg for the following year's increase in rail fares. However, the Government said on Tuesday that ticket prices would go up by less than the July RPI, which came in at 9 per cent.

CPI inflation is forecast to fall back slowly to around five per cent by the end of the year. That would meet Rishi Sunak's New Year pledge to halve inflation in 2023.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt said: "The decisive action we've taken to tackle inflation is working, and the rate now stands at its lowest level since February last year.

"But while price rises are slowing, we're not at the finish line. We must stick to our plan to halve inflation this year and get it back to the 2 per cent target as soon as possible."

























Food		July inflation	Jan – July
Bread and cereals		14.4%	
Meat		12.7%	
Fish		13.4%	
Milk, cheese and eggs		18.7%	
Fruit		8.4%	
Vegetables		16.7%	
Sugar, chocolate and confectionery		16.3%	
Coffee, tea and cocoa		9.3%	
Mineral waters, soft drinks and juices		15.2%	
Spirits		5.0%	
Wine		5.0%	
Beer		11.8%	

Table: Simon Hunt • Source: ONS • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Atlas



Atlas are a well-established property company offering a comprehensive range of services to landlords and investors across the residential and commercial sectors in London.

We provide in-depth expertise on acquisitions, disposals, development and management, alongside traditional lettings and sales services. We even look after the financial side for some of our clients, from sourcing mortgage providers to a complete book-keeping service.

We pride ourselves on offering a personal yet professional service, keeping integrity and honesty at our core. It's why for many of our clients, we're nothing less than a comprehensive property solution.

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Cyprus News

Cyprus economy sees growth slowdown to 2.1 per cent in second quarter

The Cypriot economy experienced a notable deceleration in its growth rate during the second quarter of 2023, with GDP growth slowing to 2.1 per cent compared to the same period in 2022.

This marks a significant slowdown from the 3.1 per cent growth recorded in the first quarter of the current year and the 4.6 per cent growth in the fourth quarter of 2022 on an annual basis, according to a report released on Friday.

After adjusting GDP for seasonal fluctuations and working days, the annual growth rate eased to 2.3 per cent during the second quarter of 2023, down from 3.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2023 and 4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2022, on an annual basis.

On a quarterly basis, after seasonal and working day adjustments, GDP shrank by 0.4 per cent in the second quarter of 2023 compared to the first quarter of the same year.

In the first quarter of the current year, GDP had expanded by 1.1 per cent when compared to the fourth quarter of 2022.

The GDP for the second quarter of 2023 reached €6.15 billion.

The Statistical Service attributed the positive growth rate for Q2 2023 mainly to sectors including Hotels and Restaurants, Transportation and Storage, Information and Communications, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Other Service Activities.

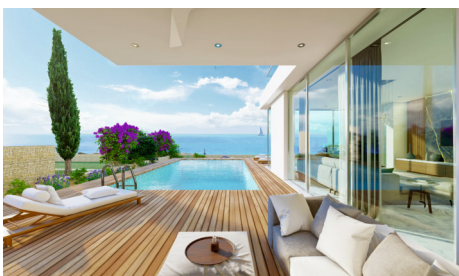


Viewpoint Hills, Pafos

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Elite Residences | Pafos



Galaxy Residences | Pafos



Cyprus News

Cyprus sees modest recovery in new loans amid rising borrowing costs

Net new loans in Cyprus showed a modest recovery in July 2023, reaching €300.5 million compared to €240 million in the previous month.

For the period from January to July, net new loans amounted to €2.03 billion, compared to €1.93 billion for the same period in 2022.

This increase comes as borrowing costs have been on the rise due to successive interest rate hikes by the European Central Bank.

Corporate net new loans exceeding €1 million stood at €133.5 million, up from €61.2 million the previous month and €86.2 million in July 2022.

Housing loans, the second-largest loan category, remained at roughly the same levels, reaching €84.6 million from €84.4 million the previous month and €77.5 million in the same month of 2022.

Corporate loans up to €1 million followed, amounting to €47 million, up from €42.6 million the previous month and €36.8 million in the same period last year.

According to data from the Central Bank of Cyprus, consumer loans reached €24.1 million in July, up from €21.5 million the previous month, and a significant increase from the €13.4 million recorded in the same period last year.

Finally, net new loans in the category of “other loans” for July 2023 decreased to €11.4 million, compared to €30.1 million in the previous month and just €6.2 million in July 2022.



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What We Do

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- Citizenships/Residentships in various jurisdictions
- VIP services to High-Net-Worth Individuals
- Yacht chartering
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Cyprus News



Limassol still driving force in Cyprus property market

The local real estate market has also seen a surge in property sales in Larnaca

The Cyprus Real Estate Registration Council this week has unveiled a comprehensive analysis of the property sales trends across Cyprus for the first half of the year.

The data, sourced from the Department of Lands and Surveys, provides valuable insights into the dynamics of the Cypriot real estate market.

Council for Registration of Real Estate Agents president Marinos Kineyirou

Focusing on the four main property categories, as it does in its quarterly reports, the council has documented a total of 11,564 property transactions including houses, apartments, plots, and fields across all regions of the island during the first half of 2023.

Leading the sales categories are land transactions, accounting for 42.2 per cent of total sales. Land plots follow at 23.5 per cent, apartments at 18.9 per cent, and houses at 15.3 per cent.

In terms of regional distribution, Limassol holds the highest share of sales with 32.3 per cent, followed by Nicosia at 25.7 per cent.

Larnaca stands in third place with 20.9 per cent, while Paphos and Famagusta contribute 16.8 per cent and 4.1 per cent respectively.

It should be noted that these percentages are reflective of the sales volume and not the property values.

“Statistical analysis is a crucial tool that contributes to a better understanding of the market,” Marinos Kineyirou, the president of the Cyprus Real Estate Registration Council said.

Over the last year and a half, since the council gained access to comparative sales data from the Department of Lands and Surveys, we have placed significant importance on these insights to better inform licensed real estate agents and the public,” the council president added.

The report also showed that the Larnaca district has demonstrated remarkable performance in the four primary property categories, surpassing Paphos and closely trailing Nicosia.

Particularly noteworthy is Larnaca’s dominance in apartment sales across Cyprus, accounting for 28.7 per cent of total apartment transactions.

Meanwhile, the Limassol district has played a pivotal role in the property market’s trajectory in recent years, according to the council.

The district’s size and the presence of numerous foreign companies have sustained high demand levels. What is more, despite its association with large developments, Limassol maintains substantial land sales. With 924 transactions in the first half of the year, land sales in Limassol represent 34 per cent of national land transactions.

Nicosia’s property market remains balanced across the four property categories. It closely trails Limassol in apartment sales and holds a significant share in land sales. While Nicosia ranks third in house sales, it surpasses only Famagusta in apartment sales, standing behind Paphos in house transactions.

In terms of the Paphos district, according to the report, a defining characteristic of Paphos’ property market in recent years has been the notable surge in house sales.

The statistics from the first half of 2023 mirror this trend, as one in four house transactions across Cyprus occurred in the Paphos region.





Y



LIMASSOL SIMPLY THE BEST



YOO Limassol has been recognised World's Best project

YOO Limassol Inspired by Starck got international honorary recognition by winning 10 International Property Awards, including two World's Best Awards for Residential and Leisure Development 2022-2023. These important accolades and this unprecedented success for Cyprus really put the country on the global real estate map.

YOO Limassol is the island's first of its kind, high-end branded residential project of the world-famous French designer Philippe Starck. It features 81 villas and 84 apartments with exclusive design and breathtaking sea views.

What makes this luxury project stand out is its concept of a 'city within a city,' featuring a plethora of amenities to ensure a rich and varied lifestyle for its residents, whether they are conducting business, playing sports, maintaining a healthy lifestyle or raising a family.

YOO residents will have exclusive access to the Residents Club, which offers more than 1,500 sq.m. of different types of recreation and entertainment and 400 sq.m. sandy beach.

Among the amenities available to residents are a spa, a gym, a cinema, a kids club and a business centre. Outdoor sports facilities include a tennis court, bocce area, mini golf, water sports, and yoga and pilates classes. The golden sandy bay offers a marina for yachts and a safe, secluded area for children to play in.

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Press Release



DEPUTY MINISTRY OF SHIPPING
24/08/2023

In an Offshore wind farm in France, the first Cypriot construction of a floating electricity collection hub

The Cypriot company Multimarine Services Ltd has successfully completed the construction of the Floating Electrical Hub for the EOLMED Offshore Wind Farm Project. The Floating Electrical Hub (FEH) will be installed off Port La Nouvelle in France.

The construction was completed on schedule and with complete safety, at Multimarine's facilities in Limassol port.

The EOLMED Offshore Wind Farm Project concerns the construction and operation of 30 MW floating offshore wind turbines, at a distance of 15km from the Gruissan coastline in France at a depth of 59m to 90m. EOLMED consists of the giant companies specializing in Renewable Energy Sources (RES) Qair, Total, BW Ideol and MHI Vestas.

The Floating Electrical Hub (FEH) is a buoy-shaped unpropelled float used as an electrical hub to collect the electrical output from floating offshore wind turbines and export it to shore.

Another investment of millions in Cyprus, with the most important being the trust in a company that has been based in Cyprus for more than twenty years and provides specialized services in the fields of Shipping and Energy. With the successful completion of the above project, Multimarine Services Ltd enters dynamically in Renewable Energy Sources and in the field of specialized constructions for offshore wind farms in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

Offshore windfarm projects are at the top of the news and are already of concern to governments in Greece and Cyprus, with the competent Ministries expecting expressions of interest from investors in RES.





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A Landmark Achievement: Infocredit Group's Joint Venture, Malta Credit Bureau Limited, Licensed as CRA Credit Reference Agency (CRA)

Infocredit Group, in collaboration with the Malta Association of Credit Management, is thrilled to announce that their joint venture, Malta Credit Bureau Limited, has successfully obtained a license to function as a credit reference agency (CRA) in Malta. This momentous achievement marks a new era in the region's credit assessment and risk management.

The license, issued by the Trade Licensing Unit under the authority of the Ministry of Commerce and in collaboration with the Central Bank of Malta, enables Malta Credit Bureau to access data held in the Central Credit Register (CCR). This crucial step facilitates the generation of comprehensive credit scores, serving as indispensable tools for informed lending and risk management strategies.

"Establishing our presence as a CRA in Malta, Malta Credit Bureau Limited views this licensing as a monumental step, and we at Infocredit Group are immensely proud to be a part of this achievement," said Theodoros Kringou, CEO of Infocredit Group. "This underscores our commitment to advancing credit assessment practices and reflects our dedication to facilitating prudent risk management."

Credit reference agencies like Malta Credit Bureau Limited will play a vital role in today's financial landscape by compiling, evaluating, and presenting credit information on individuals and businesses. This rigorous analysis strengthens the overall risk management practices and enables companies to make confident, well-informed decisions about extending credit.



Specializing in credit scoring and offering various ancillary products, Malta Credit Bureau Limited aims to serve the interests of Malta's trade creditors, credit institutions, and financial establishments. Their focus on producing in-depth credit scoring reports that probe into creditworthiness and risk assessment is a testament to the expertise and commitment that Infocredit Group brings to the partnership.

Infocredit Group, a global leader in credit and compliance risk solutions, continues to support this partnership's mission to enhance credit scoring and risk management practices in Malta.

For further inquiries or more information on Infocredit Group, please visit www.infocreditgroup.com or contact them via phone at 22 398 000 or email at info@infocreditgroup.com.

About Infocredit Group

With a global network of partners, Infocredit Group, www.infocreditgroup.com is a leading credit and compliance risk solutions provider. Their collaborative efforts with the Malta Association of Credit Management have culminated in establishing Malta Credit Bureau Limited, a pioneering joint venture.

About Malta Credit Bureau Limited

Malta Credit Bureau Limited specializes in credit scoring and offers various products that cater to the interests of trade creditors, credit institutions, and financial establishments in Malta.

Their commitment to robust creditworthiness and risk assessment practices contributes significantly to strengthening risk management within the region. www.mcb.mt

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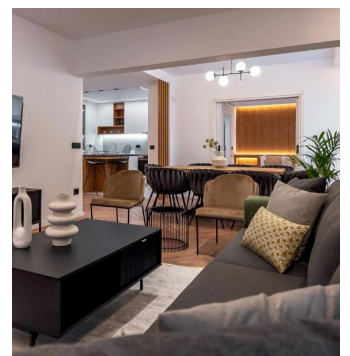
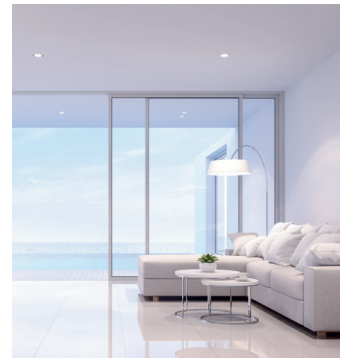
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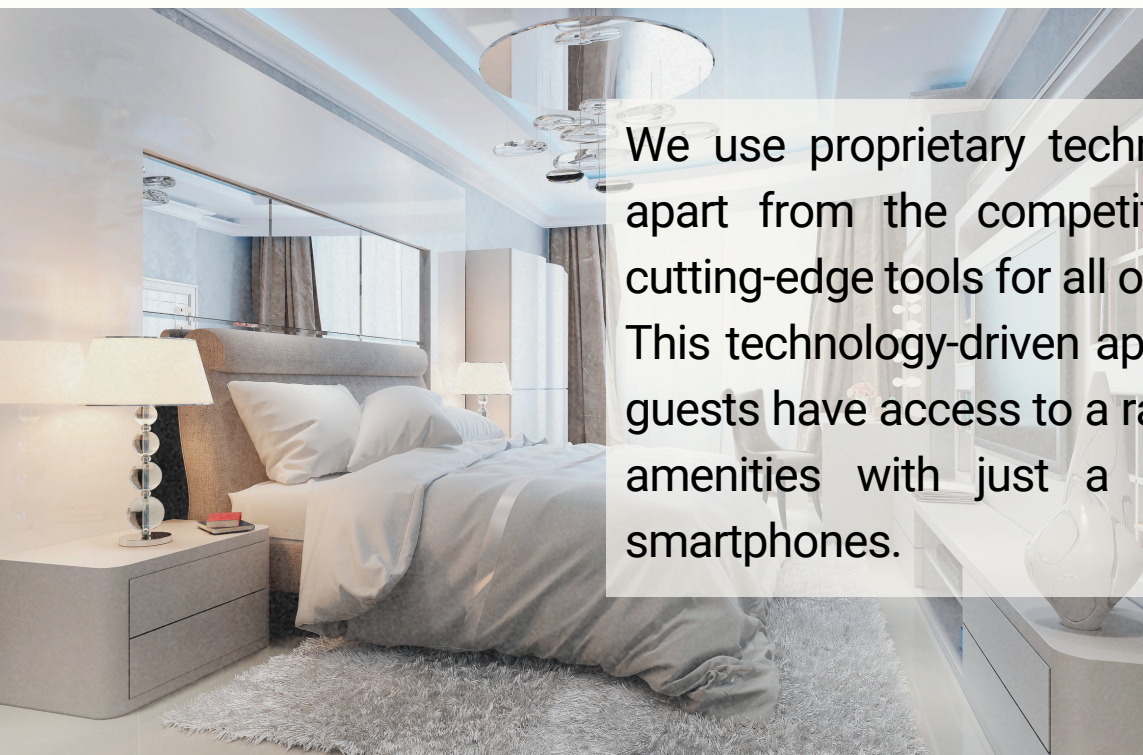


Our expertise extends beyond the mere provision of accommodations. The company leverages proprietary technology to streamline real estate supply growth, interior design, pricing strategies, bookings, guest service, and property management. This technological prowess allows for enhanced efficiency, seamless transactions, and personalized guest experiences throughout the entire stay.

Phaedrus Living stands out for our unwavering commitment to offering unparalleled luxury. Every property in our portfolio is carefully selected and designed to provide the utmost comfort and elegance.



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Will the Renters Reform Bill harm Tenants?

By Gary Scott, Partner at Spector Constant & Williams

The Renters Reform Bill is a bold attempt by Government to change the structure and nature of the Landlord and Tenant relationship that has been in place for the last 30 years by abolishing Assured Shorthold Tenancies. The aim is to remedy existing issues within the rental sector and to try to balance Tenants' security and a settled home life against the flexibility of Landlords to deal with their property. The proposed legislation seems to have at its heart the idea that both parties should "play fair".

What some have called the "no-fault" eviction mechanism will be ended, but it would better be described as the ending of "no-reason" evictions. Landlords would still have specified permitted reasons for eviction where the Tenant is not at fault.

The right to end a tenancy for rent arrears is set to be changed to include

repeated late payment as a mandatory ground, meaning the Court must give possession in these circumstances rather than being able to exercise its discretion. If a tenant is two months in arrears three times or more in a three year period, the Court must order possession even if those arrears are cleared. This is a big change to the existing rules where a possession order can be avoided by reducing arrears to less than two months rent on the day of the hearing.

The Bill also introduces other grounds so landlords are not trapped into a tenancy agreement should their circumstances change. It is proposed to allow termination of a tenancy where a landlord wishes to sell or develop the property. The Bill also proposes to introduce a new ground for circumstances where the Local Authority deem the property to be too small for the number of occupants.

Increased regulation in the private rental sector is proposed to drive out rogue landlords. All landlords would have to register on a central database. Enforcement against rogue landlords would be strengthened and "justice" would be dispensed by the local authority acting as judge, jury and executioner. Significant financial penalties are introduced for landlords who do not comply with regulations or act in bad faith.

Nothing in the Bill, however, addresses the fundamental issue of enforcement of landlords' possession rights. The system for evicting a bad tenant through the Courts is broken. There is significant delay in getting to a first hearing and where there is dispute over facts, it can take over a year to resolve. During that period rent arrears may grow to unmanageable levels and property damage or anti-social behaviour can continue unabated.

The ending of section 21 “no-reason” evictions means that every case will require evidence to be presented, which can then be challenged. The system cannot cope with its current workload and the proposed legislation will only add to that workload.

Each part of the system needs reform, from the point of issuing a Claim for possession, the initial processing of that Claim, getting before a Judge and thereafter processing evictions via the Court Bailiff. There is significant delay in each of these areas of the process. To remedy will require significant investment.

There is no detail, as yet, from the Government as to what it proposes or when. They are looking to implement “end to end digitisation of the process” and to explore prioritisation of cases of anti-social behaviour.

This in itself would not solve the problem of a lack of Judges or judicial time which is available for such Claims. There is a significant backlog of civil cases in general. On average, Small Claims cases are heard forty-five weeks from the date of issue of

the Claim and fast track or multi-track cases seventy-two weeks from the date of issue. The number of Court employees has fallen by over a quarter in the decade from 2011 to 2021 and the number of Judges has also fallen slightly, which reflects a significant fall in real terms considering the increase in workload.

If the Government is prepared to finance a modern court service to deal with this sector that can deliver judicial outcomes swiftly, then the proposed renting revolution could actually work. This is unfortunately a very large “IF” and a failure to do so will lead to an imbalance that would have a serious impact on landlords and unintended consequences for tenants.

Landlords with small portfolios are already leaving the market due to interest rate rises, inflation, and the ending of mortgage interest as a tax-deductible expense. There is a real danger that fears over increased regulation and the possibility of fines being imposed by the local authority without any judicial process will drive even more from the market, especially

if the process of enforcing against a bad tenant remains as lengthy and costly as it is now.

51% of rental properties are owned by landlords with 1 to 4 properties. It is not difficult to foresee that the effect of even a minority of those landlords leaving the market will result in a significant lack of supply driving up rents. Indeed, Rightmove have released figures showing that the number of properties available to rent on their platform in Q1 2023 was over 35% down on the average number for the same period between 2017 and 2019. Average rents in the private sector have gone up over 10% in the same period.

This Bill, designed to help renters, may ultimately prove to do just the opposite.

If you would like some assistance with any property matters or further information about the Renters Reform Bill, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Gary Scott
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When a holiday unexpectedly teaches you a lesson

By Savvas Savvides, Partner at Michale Kyprianou & Co. LLC

michaelkyprianou
Law Firm

August is usually the month of holidays, particularly in Europe, and most people plan their holidays months in advance, always anticipating the good times that they will have, and never thinking that things may go wrong, when an incident that you don't expect happens.

I was in a similar situation this year when I took my family on a trip to Spain, where, unfortunately, I was a victim of a robbery. This situation made me wonder what my legal rights were and whether I was treated in the proper manner, and if my rights had been violated in any respect.



The incident happened in a busy shopping mall in Barcelona, which had full security in and around the building. I had just taken my backpack off my shoulder for a minute and it was suddenly snatched from me by a youngster who grabbed it and ran.

You can imagine my shock, and it took a few seconds for me to realize what had happened, and, honestly, my first reaction was to see to the state of my children who witnessed the whole incident, rather than give chase to the thief.

Even though this happened in a busy shopping mall, with full security measures in place, the thief managed to get away with my backpack scot-free. This incident raised many legal issues which I want to discuss with you. Firstly, from a personal perspective, my bag that was snatched from me contained a lot of my personal belongings, since, being a tourist, we had our travel documents, our camera, our credit cards, etc. I was bearing the responsibility of safekeeping the items which we needed on our trip. When setting off on your holiday, one usually doesn't stop to think beforehand what would happen in a situation such as this and how you would protect yourself if this happens?

After we calmed down and tried to pacify our children who witnessed this incident, I requested from the security management of the shopping mall to investigate this incident and to look at the CCTV cameras. I was stunned to be told that they objected to showing us the video because this was against the GDPR regulations and the video would show other people's faces.

Being a lawyer, I am fully aware of the GDPR regulations, but the management of the mall did not take into consideration that this was an incident of a criminal nature which had taken place on their premises, and we, the victims, were a family with young children. I explained to them that I had no intention of using the footage for any other reason than the fact that I wanted to see the face of the individual who had stolen my bag, and it would also possibly give the management the opportunity to investigate the incident further.

In fact, the person who stole my bag was a 'visitor' of the mall, and, strictly legally speaking, from the moment that he stepped into the mall, he was, or should have been, aware that there are CCTV cameras on the premises and therefore he has tacitly agreed to having his face shown on the camera for security reasons. The management of the mall, however, was not keen on investigating the video, stating that the GDPR regulations would be violated. This excuse does not stand from a legal perspective and was actually the wrong decision on their part.

At the same time, I requested (and demanded) that the whole incident be reported to the police, and although the management of the mall was helpful in a way, by giving us the details of the nearest police station, they refused to call the police to ask them to come to the place where the 'crime' had taken place.

Taking into consideration that my priority was a mental health one, especially with regard to my children, and in order not to cause any more anxiety for them by getting into an argument with the management of the mall, we left the mall to take the children back to the safety of the hotel, and it gave me the opportunity to follow this up alone at the police station later to secure my rights.

There are situations where the law requires you to report an incident, further to the fact that I had lost a lot of personal items, and most importantly, all our passports. It is significant to note that the passports that were stolen from us, in a foreign country, actually belong to the Republic of Cyprus, i.e. the country which issued these passports.

Being in another European country, I went to the Police Station and requested to report the incident, and although it was quite late in the evening, I was shocked to hear that the Police Officer could not take a statement from me because there was no one who spoke English at the Station at that time.

This approach shocked me again as I know what my legal rights are and what the duties of the Police Officer are with regard to taking down a statement, but being in a foreign country, I tried to be as polite as possible and asked them when I could return to give the statement when an interpreter would be available, at which stage they told me they didn't know.

The next day I asked the hotel manager to communicate with the Police Station to speak to them in Spanish, since English is not widely spoken in Spain. I had written my statement in English, stipulating my legal rights, and what exactly I wanted to tell the Police, and the hotel manager communicated the contents of my letter to them and demanded that a report be made of the incident.

This seemed to have worked because in less than an hour later I was invited to the Police Station to formally give my report and, surprisingly enough, a Police Officer who spoke English was available who took down my report. It was unfortunate that I had to fight for my rights in a European country, and it immediately made me wonder what a layman, who does not know his legal rights, would have done in a situation similar to mine.

This brings me to another issue that I would like people to be aware of, and that is one reason for writing this article, and that is about what happens when you lose your travelling documents in a foreign country. You have to immediately report it to the local Police Department and file a report. Do not be afraid to demand that a report is taken down of the incident.

As soon as you report it to the Police, the lost passports must be cancelled in order to prevent anyone else from using them, but this means that you are unable to travel without these. In such a case, you need to immediately contact your Embassy to apply for an emergency passport by following the Emergency Travel Document Process. This will allow you to get an emergency travel document.

Things get more complicated especially if young children are concerned, since you need to confirm your children's ID as a parent, which is a procedure called for by the Emergency Travel Document Process.

As this was an emergency situation, and as we are citizens of another European country, I have to admit that this was less problematic, since the requirements could be met more easily than if we were a country which is not in the European Union.

In general, it is very important to be aware of what to do in an emergency situation. In our case, we contacted the Cypriot Embassy through the emergency number of the Embassy. What I found out, however, was that the emergency number for the Cyprus Embassy in Spain has not been in operation since 2021, and following an inquiry into this, I discovered that there was a disagreement amongst the people answering the emergency calls, which has resulted in the whole issue remaining pending since 2021. The Cyprus Government needs to resolve this issue regarding the emergency calls, because even though I found a way to resolve my issue myself, this does not mean that everyone will also be in a position to do so themselves.

Notwithstanding the above unfortunate incident, we still enjoyed our holiday, with good memories from day one, and we have not allowed this incident to cloud the good times that we had. It has made me and my family more aware of the things that can go wrong, but it has also given me a reason to strive to improve the whole process, so that people who find themselves in the same predicament as me can get better treatment.

The content of this article is valid as at the date of its first publication. It is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter and does not constitute legal advice. We recommend that you seek professional advice on your specific matter before acting on any information provided. For further information or advice, please contact Savvas Savvides, Managing Partner at Paphos Office, Telephone +357 26930800 or email savvas.savvides@kyprianou.com

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Why did Bitcoin drop? Crypto Analysts point to 5 potential reasons

By Panayiotis A. Koussis, Senior Lawyer at Pelagias Christodoulou Vrachas LLC



Bitcoin's price fell approximately 8% in a span of 10 minutes, leaving crypto investors scrambling to make sense of the drop.

Elon Musk's SpaceX reportedly selling its Bitcoin \$26,575 holdings, the bankruptcy of a Chinese property giant Evergrande Group, and fears of interest rate hikes have been among the theories raised as to Bitcoin's freak price dip.

On 18th of August 2023 around 12:35am, the price of Bitcoin suddenly plummeted over 8% in a span of 10 minutes, taking with it the wider cryptocurrency market, leaving many in the crypto community scratching their heads.



SpaceX offloads Bitcoin, interest rate fears

eToro market analyst Josh Gilbert pinned the drop on a report that SpaceX may have offloaded some or all of its \$373 million in Bitcoin holdings, which came from an article dated 17th August 2023 from The Wall Street Journal.

"Whenever you have a big name in the industry selling Bitcoin, especially someone as influential as Elon Musk, it will put the price under pressure."

Gilbert said another theory could be the rapid shift in sentiment, due to the broader markets' expectations of future interest rate hikes from the U.S. Federal Reserve.

"If we also consider some of the weaknesses we've seen across global markets — particularly risk assets — over the last few weeks with the expectation that rates will likely stay higher for longer, it was a recipe for a pullback," Gilbert explained.

"Bitcoin has struggled for a leg higher in the last month, trading in a tight range of between \$29k and \$30k with little 'good news' to push the asset higher, which has only exuberated this sell-off," he added.

Government bond yields

Tina Teng, a market analyst from CMC Markets, shared a different opinion, looking to the recent rise in government bond yields as the root cause behind the sell-off.

Teng explained that increasing bond yields typically shows a reduction in liquidity for the broader market. "This could be the primary reason that cryptocurrencies sank," she said.

Additionally, Teng said that while the Evergrande Group crisis could have an indirect cause on the price of Bitcoin she did not believe that it was among the root causes of the decline. "This has more of an impact on sentiment toward the Chinese economy and investors," she explained.

Chinese Yuan still a risk to Bitcoin

However, while Teng disregarded the Evergrande crisis as a major reason for Bitcoin’s price swing, Matrixport Head of Research Markus Thielen claimed the risk of a Chinese Yuan devaluation may have played a significant role in the sell-off.

“The biggest macro risk is a potential devaluation of the Chinese Yuan, which is trading at the weakest level since 2007.

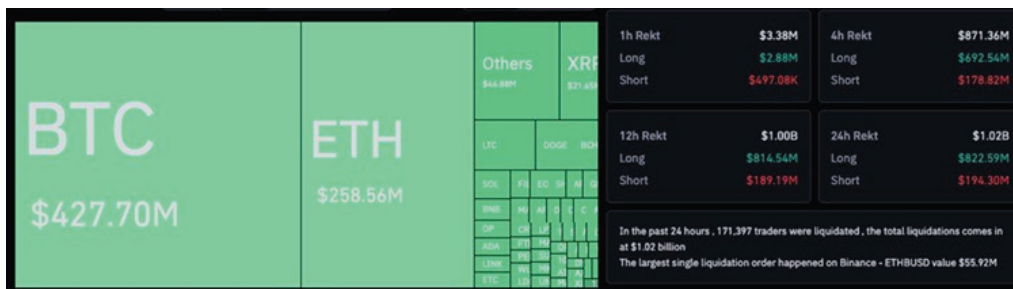
“In August 2015, when China devalued the Yuan for the last time, Bitcoin prices declined by -23% during the two weeks following the devaluation. Before a more meaningful rally started, Bitcoin finished the year +59% from the level of the devaluation,” explained Thielen.

Whale’s selling big

While there were many other news events that could bear responsibility, pseudonymous derivatives trader TheFlowHorse told the press that the sudden move down could have resulted from a single large actor making a big sell, which then resulted in further pressure on derivatives.

“It was not just a natural cascade. Someone big bailed for a purpose and set it in motion. Spot volume barely compared to perps.”

According to data from the crypto analytics platform Coinglass, more than \$427 million in Bitcoin long positions were liquidated in the four hours to time of publication. Over the course of the last 24 hours, there had been more than \$822 million in liquidations for traders with open long positions — a bet that the price of crypto assets would move upwards.



More than \$427 million worth of Bitcoin long positions have been liquidated in the last 24 hours.
Source: Coinglass

Describing much of the explanations for the decline as “pure speculation,” Horse suggested that since the reports of the SEC hinting its approval of an Ethereum Futures ETF came moments after the dump — a large fund may have offloaded their Bitcoin position to “trigger a cascade to buy ETH.”

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EU Green Claims Directive: Tackling misleading eco-friendly marketing

By Aylin Zeybek, Elias Neocleous & Co LLC



As the influence of sustainability and environmental awareness grows in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions, companies have begun to embrace a new trend of marketing their products as 'climate neutral' in an attempt to attract environmentally conscious customers. This form of marketing is however becoming problematic as many of these claims have been found to be untrue or misleading. As a result, there is now an urgent need for the European Commission to step in to address this issue and to take measures to safeguard consumers.



Erosion of consumer trust

The findings of a recent study have highlighted concerning trends in the realm of green claims on products and services. A significant 53% of these claims were found to be either vague, misleading, or lacking a solid basis, while 40% lacked the necessary supporting evidence to validate their environmental assertion. These results have led to a substantial erosion of consumer trust in green claims, reflecting the pressing need for enhanced transparency and accountability in the communication of eco-friendly statements to regain consumer confidence and to ensure accurate information regarding the environmental impact of products and services available in the market.

Legal battles challenging green claims

Furthermore, a growing number of corporate green claims are also being challenged in the courts today. Legal actions have been initiated by activists and other concerned parties against numerous companies who are accused of engaging in greenwashing practices that have misled consumers. It is widely anticipated that the forthcoming court decisions will have a significant impact on the landscape of eco-friendly assertions. As a result of these cases, the way companies utilize environment-related claims within their advertising campaigns and other modes of communicative strategies is likely to undergo a substantial transformation. These legal battles evidence the increasing demand for greater transparency and responsibility in the way companies communicate their commitment to sustainable practices.

The EU Commission is now proposing new rules designed to curtail the practice of companies disseminating deceptive information concerning the environmental impacts of their products and services. The aim is to foster a more transparent and reliable marketplace, where consumers can confidently navigate their choices while actively contributing to positive environmental outcomes.

Current measures to safeguard consumers in Cyprus from misleading green claims

Pursuant to the provisions of the Consumer Protection Law in Cyprus, the use of inaccurate information on a product which is likely to deceive the average consumer and lead him to make a purchase which he would not otherwise make may fall under the ambit of unfair commercial practices which is prohibited under the Law. As such, the use of green claims on products in Cyprus may be deemed to be misleading if incorrect and not supported by evidence.

Moreover, it is also required by Law that any advertisements made for the purpose of promoting products or services are free from any incorrect information and backed up by evidence. For example, if a product making a "green" assertion is distributed in the Cyprus market, it might be deemed as deceptive marketing if the assertion lacks substantiating proof. Such fictitious advertising practices are not allowed under the law, as these rules are meant to protect consumers from being misled.

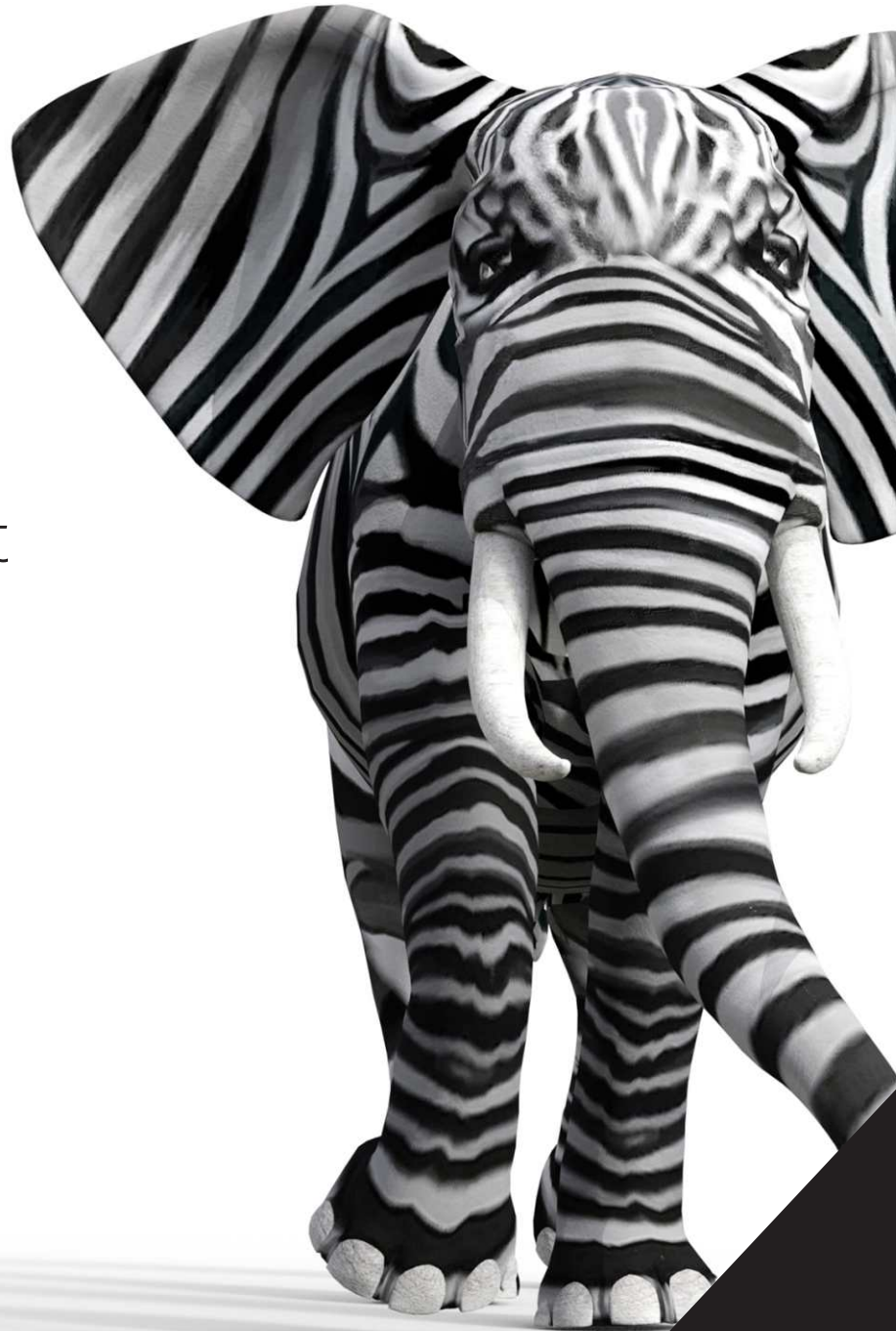
Proposal for a Directive on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims (Green Claims Directive)

The proposal put forth by the EU Commission takes the form of a Directive focusing specifically on the Green Claims. It lays out overarching objectives, serving as a roadmap that member states must adapt and incorporate into their respective national legal frameworks. Specifically, the proposal is designed to target claims made by businesses about their products, services, or organizations that reference any kind of environmental impact. Amongst other requirements that are put forward, member states would be required to establish verification and enforcement processes, which would be carried out by independent and accredited verifiers. It is necessary for claims to be substantiated and verified by an independent verifier, who will then issue a certificate of compliance. It has been explicitly stated that the companies who have fewer than 10 employees and less than €2 million turnover are exempt from the obligations of this proposal. Lastly, within the framework of the proposal, it is required that member states implement penalties that adhere to the principles of being "effective, proportionate, and dissuasive." The objective is that by embedding these principles in their enforcement mechanisms, member states can collectively foster a culture of responsible environmental claims and deter deceptive or misleading behavior.

In conclusion, the rise of 'climate neutral' marketing underscores the pressing need for stringent action against misleading eco-friendly claims. Legal battles and the proposed EU Green Claims Directive are essential steps towards rebuilding consumer confidence, and ensuring a marketplace driven by transparency and accountability. As sustainability gains importance, accurate information and responsible practices are paramount for a greener future.

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EUIPO and WIPO Trademark Oppositions & Settlements

How AGP Law Can Assist with Oppositions, Objections,
and Settlement Solutions

By Angelos Paphitis, Managing Partner and Michael Davies, Senior Legal Counsel at AGP Law

Trademark oppositions play a crucial role in protecting intellectual property rights and ensuring fair competition in the marketplace. This article provides a detailed overview of trademark opposition procedures at the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Furthermore, it outlines the ways AGP Law can assist clients who wish to oppose a trademark application, object an opposition, or seek settlement solutions such as coexistence agreements.

EUIPO Trademark Oppositions

Overview of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO):

- The EUIPO is responsible for registering European Union trademarks (EUTMs) within the European Union (EU).
- EUIPO oppositions provide a platform for third parties to challenge the registration of a trademark.





Grounds for Opposition

- The Relative Grounds – Oppositions can be filed if the applied-for trademark is similar or identical to an earlier trademark and there is a likelihood of confusion.
- The Absolute Grounds – Oppositions can be based on absolute grounds for refusal, such as descriptive or generic marks, lack of distinctiveness, or signs contrary to public policy or accepted principles.

AGP Law's Role in EUIPO Oppositions

- Consultation: Our firm will review the opposition grounds, assess the likelihood of success, and advise clients on the best course of action.
- Preparation and Filing: We will prepare a comprehensive opposition notice and file it with the EUIPO within the prescribed timeframe.
- Evidence Collection: We will gather relevant evidence, such as prior trademark registrations, market surveys, and expert opinions (if needed), to strengthen the opposition case.
- Negotiation and Settlement: We can engage in negotiations with the opposing party to explore settlement options, including coexistence agreements or licensing arrangements.
- Representation: We can represent clients throughout the opposition proceedings, including written arguments, written submissions and hearings, and any necessary appeals.

WIPO Trademark Oppositions

Overview of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO):

- The WIPO provides a platform for international trademark registration through the Madrid System.
- WIPO opposition allows parties to challenge the registration of an international trademark.

Grounds for Opposition

- Similar to the EUIPO, the WIPO oppositions can be based on relative grounds of refusal, involving likelihood of confusion with prior trademarks.
- Absolute grounds for refusal, such as generic or descriptive marks, lack of distinctiveness, or violation of public policy, may also be invoked.



AGP Law's Role in WIPO Oppositions

- **Assessment and Strategy:** We will review the opposition grounds, evaluate the strength of the case, and devise a comprehensive opposition strategy.
- **Preparation and Filing:** We will draft a well-structured opposition notice and file it with the WIPO within the prescribed time limits.
- **Evidence Collection:** We will gather relevant evidence, including international registrations and evidence of prior use, to support the opposition claim.
- **Mediation and Settlement:** We can explore mediation and settlement options through WIPO's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services, promoting coexistence agreements or other mutually beneficial solutions.
- **Advocacy and Representation:** We represent clients during the opposition proceedings, presenting arguments, attending remote hearings, and managing any subsequent appeals.
- **Settlement Solutions: Coexistence Agreements and More:**

Coexistence Agreements

- Coexistence agreements allow parties with similar trademarks to peacefully coexist and operate in the same market without causing confusion or infringement.
- We can assist in negotiating and drafting coexistence agreements that outline the rights, limitations, and obligations of both parties, ensuring a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Other Settlement Solutions

- **Licensing Agreements:** We can help clients explore licensing agreements where one party grants permission to another to use their trademark under specific conditions.
- **Assignment of Rights:** We can assist in the transfer of trademark rights between parties, ensuring a smooth transition and proper documentation.
- **Domain Name Disputes:** In cases involving conflicts between trademarks and domain names, we can provide guidance and representation in domain name dispute resolution procedures.

Advantages of AGP Law's Services

Expertise and Experience:

- Our firm boasts a team of experienced trademark attorneys with in-depth knowledge of EUIPO and WIPO opposition procedures.
- We have a track record of successful outcomes in trademark opposition cases, leveraging our expertise to protect clients' interests effectively.



Tailored Legal Strategies

- We understand that every opposition case is unique, and we develop customized strategies based on the specific needs and goals of our clients.
- We conduct thorough research and analysis to build strong opposition arguments and maximize the chances of a favorable outcome.

Comprehensive Support

- Our services encompass the entire opposition process, from initial consultation to final resolution, ensuring that clients receive comprehensive and consistent support throughout.
- We handle all legal documentation, evidence collection, negotiations, and representation, alleviating the burden on clients and allowing them to focus on their core business activities.

Trademark oppositions are critical for safeguarding intellectual property rights, while understanding and navigating through the procedures at EUIPO and WIPO requires expertise and strategic thinking. Our law firm specializes in assisting clients with trademark oppositions, objections, and settlement solutions, including all sorts of settlement agreements.

What is a Coexistence Agreement?

Coexistence agreements are legally binding contracts that allow two parties with similar or potentially conflicting trademarks to coexist and operate in the same market without causing confusion or infringing on each other's rights. These agreements establish clear boundaries and rights for each party, ensuring that they can peacefully coexist and maintain their respective brand identities.



Here are some additional details about coexistence agreements

- **Their Purpose:** Coexistence agreements are primarily aimed at resolving conflicts between trademarks that are similar or identical. By defining the scope of each party's rights and establishing guidelines for coexistence, these agreements help prevent confusion among consumers and minimize the risk of trademark infringement claims.
- **Terms and Conditions:** Coexistence agreements typically include several key provisions, such as:
 - **Territory:** The agreement specifies the geographical territories where each party can use its trademark. This helps delineate the market boundaries and prevent direct competition in overlapping regions.
 - **Goods/Services:** The agreement identifies the specific goods or services that each party may offer under its trademark. This ensures that the trademarks can coexist in distinct product or service categories, reducing the likelihood of confusion.
 - **Quality Control:** Coexistence agreements may often require both parties to maintain certain quality standards associated with their goods or services. This ensures that consumers are not misled or deceived by subpar products bearing either trademark.
 - **Use Guidelines:** The agreement may establish guidelines for how each party should use its trademark, including rules related to branding, packaging, advertising, and promotional materials. These guidelines help differentiate the trademarks and maintain their distinct identities.
 - **Duration:** Coexistence agreements have a specific duration, typically several years. The parties may choose to renew the agreement upon expiration if both parties are satisfied with the coexistence arrangement.
 - **Termination:** The agreement may outline conditions under which either party can terminate the agreement, such as a breach of contract or significant changes in the market circumstances. Termination provisions ensure that parties have an exit strategy if the coexistence becomes unviable.

Benefits and Considerations of a Coexistence Agreement

Avoiding Litigation: Coexistence agreements provide an alternative to lengthy and costly legal disputes. By reaching a mutually beneficial arrangement, parties can save time, resources, and the uncertainties associated with litigation.

Market Presence: Coexistence agreements allow both parties to maintain their market presence and brand recognition, even in situations where their trademarks may be similar. This can be particularly beneficial if both parties have invested significant time and resources in building their respective brands.

Flexibility: Coexistence agreements are flexible and customizable, allowing parties to tailor the terms to their specific needs and circumstances. This flexibility enables parties to find creative solutions that balance their interests and minimize conflicts.

Compliance and Enforcement: Coexistence agreements provide a clear framework for compliance and enforcement. If either party breaches the agreement, the other party can seek legal remedies as outlined in the contract.



Legal Assistance

Developing a comprehensive coexistence agreement requires legal expertise to ensure that the terms are fair, enforceable, and protect the interests of both parties. Engaging the services of a knowledgeable trademark team of lawyers in AGP Law is crucial to drafting and negotiating a coexistence agreement that meets the unique needs of the parties involved.

It is important to note that coexistence agreements are highly specific to the parties involved and their particular circumstances. Each agreement should be carefully drafted to address the individual trademarks, market considerations, and goals of the parties seeking coexistence.

A well-known opposition involving international brands that was successfully settled through coexistence agreements is the dispute between Apple Inc. vs. The Beatles' Apple Corps Ltd. This high-profile trademark dispute arose between Apple Inc., known for its technology products, and The Beatles' Apple Corps Ltd., a music company. The conflict began in the late 1970s and revolved around the use of the "Apple" trademark in the music industry, which had previously been restricted to Apple Corps. The parties settled their differences through a series of agreements, with Apple Inc. acquiring certain rights to use the Apple logo and name in relation to computer-related products, while Apple Corps retained rights for its core music business.

For International Trademark Registrations you may also look at our World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) Applications article and for EU Trademark Registrations you may look at our European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) Applications article.

If you are looking to register a trademark, we would be happy to assist you. You may either submit for Trademark Registration through the AGP Law online application form, otherwise you may contact us at agp@agplaw.com to learn more about our services and how we can help you register your trademark.

The information provided by AGP Law | A.G. Paphitis & Co. LLC is for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as professional or formal legal advice. You should not act or refrain from acting based on any information provided above without obtaining legal or other professional advice.

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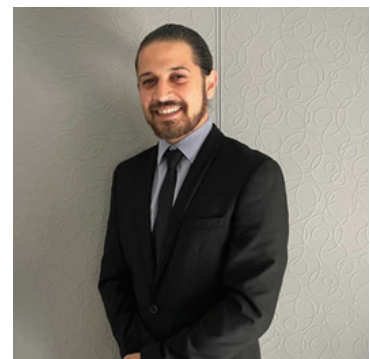
FAMILY LAW, THE RECENT AMENDMENTS OF THE LEGISLATION CREATING FASTER AND MORE EFFICIENT COURT SOLUTIONS

By Stylianos Kakouris at G. KOUZALIS LLC



On 13.01.2023, the House of Representatives passed the bills that amend and modernize the Family Courts Law (23/1990), the Attempted Conciliation and Spiritual Dissolution of Marriage (22/1990), and the Marriage Law (104(I)/2003).

In this article, we are going to summarize the most important changes and/or amendments of the Family law. This is the first time since 1983 that we have amendments of the Family law in Cyprus and it is a turning point that will make the procedures faster and more efficient for the courts and for the parties.



In respect to the Family Courts Law (23/1990) the amendments have a purpose to simplify and expedite the procedures of how the cases are handled. The judges will have the jurisdiction to hear all cases that are before the Family Courts between the same parties. Also, the current composition of three judges in the Family Courts in divorce cases will be overruled and now after the implementation of the new amendments, divorces will be issued by only one judge.

Another huge amendment that will simplify and make the procedures faster is that the parties can file only one application to the Family court for the maintenance, parental responsibility, the use of family housing and movable properties. With this amendment, the cases that are filed at the Family Court due to the different applications will be reduced significantly, but also will make it easier and less expensive for the parties as the legal fees and/or out-of-pocket expenses will decrease to 1/4th.

Further to the above the new amendments regarding the Attempted Conciliation and Spiritual Dissolution of Marriage (22/1990) have aimed to modernize the procedures of the spiritual dissolution of religious marriage. Until now the deadline for filing the application of the dissolution of marriage after the notice was 3 months, after the amendment of the law, this is reduced to 6 weeks. The procedure of the notice will change too based



on the amendments and now the parties have the option to send the notice through the website of the Holy Archdiocese of Cyprus instead of sending a notification and/or notice to the competent bishop that they want to proceed with the dissolution of the marriage. Also, we need to point out that another amendment that is extremely important to the abovementioned law is that if the dissolution of a marriage, is based on violence the applicant (party) has the right to file straight away an application to the court without the need to send the notification and/or notice as stated above. The only requirement that has to be fulfilled in order for the applicant not to send the notification they will have to provide to the court the complaint that has been filed to the police or to the Social Welfare Services in respect to the violence and/or incident. The police or the Social Welfare Services will provide to the applicant a certificate.

Finally, with reference to the amendments of Marriage Law (104(I)/2003) one of the improvements that the amendments provided are on the grounds of divorce by mutual consent. If the spouses want to proceed with the dissolution of their marriage on the grounds of mutual consent they can, but there is a time limit which is at least 6 months have elapsed since the date of the marriage and if they are any minors involved the parties have to make an agreement in order to regulate the parental responsibility and contact of the minors. Also, in respect to have irrefutably presumed breakdown of the relationship of the spouses based on the new amendments of the law is reduced from 4 to 2 years. Within the period of 2 years of the breakdown, vacations are not affecting the period of the breakdown of the relationship if they were attempts to resolve the issues of their marriage and may not exceed 3 months.

In conclusion, all of the above are just summaries of the amendments to the law that can help the courts and the parties.

What is stated above is for informational purposes only and our law firm will not be responsible for any misunderstandings and/or misinformation. Our law firm is undertaking Family Law cases of all kinds and each case is treated differently.



Our Firm

Top Pro Audit & Tax Limited is a firm of registered auditors with international connections, members of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and the institute of Chartered Certified Accountants of Cyprus.

Our Approach

- We provide personal service.
- We have high technical and ethical standards.
- We provide clear-cut and practical solutions to the client.
- We keep the grey areas for us to solve.

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The Transformational Potential of Data Science

Data science is the key to unlocking value in your data – but it's far from a one size fits all solution. By understanding the various benefits data-science achieves, leaders and professionals can make informed decisions that lead to improved financial performance, risk minimisation and operational optimisation. In this article, I provide a high-level description of data science and its benefits as well as guidelines on how to distinguish truly impactful data-science projects from the rest.



What is Data Science?

At its core, data-science finds patterns and insights that help improve decision-making, create new products and services and save time and resources by augmenting performance and processes. This translates to enhancing:

- Financial performance; improved cashflow and savings to the bottom line
- Assurance and compliance
- Risk detection and prevention

This list is not exhaustive and the transformational opportunities generated by data-science can only be limited by imagination. Using data-science you can for example monetise your data by achieving:

- A double-digit reduction of procurement costs (between 5-15% for every year analysed)
- Improved planning and operational efficiencies
- Detection & prevention of ambiguous expenses due to human error or even fraud

Data science achieves the above by seamlessly combining the art of data communication and techniques from a multitude of other quantitative disciplines. Data communication encompasses data-visualisations and compelling story-telling, which in turn requires a deep business understanding.

Is not Data Science a luxury reserved only for large organisations?

This used to be the case, but historically, innovation always gets universalised. For example, the car, the computer, the internet and many other technological advancements of the past, were initially reserved for a select few. After these technologies got democratised, you simply cannot imagine a business being able to function, let alone being competitive without utilising them.

In a similar fashion, most techniques and technologies now popularised and democratised under the new umbrella term 'data science', have existed for decades and were typically leveraged and successfully monetised by an exclusive club of large corporations. We have now however reached a tipping point where if a modern business fails to capitalise on the value of their data, they risk being left behind.

The existing inflationary environment and stressed supply chains have shown to be relentless and reports for Q1 2023 show that global supply chains suffered nearly 4,000 disruptions, with bankruptcies rising by 240% year on year, whereas corporate restructuring events arose by 135%. For any organisation that wishes to survive and thrive in a dynamic business environment, investing in improving their data maturity is an absolute necessity.

In brief, data science levels the playing field and puts the power of data, formerly only available to major enterprises, in the hands of smaller players

How do you start implementing Data Science?

Identifying the low-hanging fruit is essential, and businesses should focus on projects that:

- Provide a direct connection to value
- Impact multiple areas of the business
- Make it easy to envision the potential of advanced data-analytics

At Novel Intelligence we specialise in such swift, low risk, high-ROI projects by combining expertise in data science, research, and forensic accounting. We can guarantee delivering value within short timeframes because we already invested thousands of hours in R&D.

Even if you do not have an elaborate strategy in place, you should definitely still have a chat with a data expert regarding your tactical requirements, as you are likely to discover unexpected new ways to add value to your products, services and operations. For example, a law firm recently approached us to help with analysing spend data related to an insolvency case. Novel Intelligence delivered a robust, sophisticated analysis at a speed that was far beyond their experience but this wasn't the only benefit. After we also delivered a non-technical training session regarding the inner workings of data-science, they realised its transformational potential for a range of applications; from mergers & acquisitions to commercial litigation, divorce and contentious probate.

The data monetisation and value-adding possibilities are endless. Whether you are an established business striving for data-driven excellence or an emerging player eager to unlock untapped potential, your data can be turned into a strategic advantage and drive remarkable growth.

You can reach out to us at kyriakos@novelintelligence.ai to embark on a transformative journey toward data-driven success.

*Dr. Kyriakos Christodoulides is the Founder and Managing Director of Novel Intelligence Ltd:
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Dubai

- UAE Company Formation
- DMCC
- RAKICC
- Mainland
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- Accounting & Audit of UAE Company
- RAKEZ
- Other Free Zone Formation

Other

- UAE Banking Services
- Estate Services
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International

- Support International Clients in Operations and Administration.
- Participation in International Networks, Associations and Alliances - United Tax Network, Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners
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- Provide Platform for Engagement Focused Cooperation between Member Firms

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- Discussion and Agreement of Tax Affairs with Tax Authorities
- Payroll Services

PAYMENT SERVICES LICENSE IN CYPRUS

By S. Constantinou & Associates LLC



Introduction

Cyprus has become a global financial centre by attracting more and more businesses and entrepreneurs from all over the world, wishing to establish the presence of their businesses in the European Union (the “EU”).

This will allow them to participate in the payment services sector within the EU and benefit from the Cyprus tax regime which is one of the lowest corporate taxes in EU as well as from the EU passporting which allows the participants to establish their business across the member states of EU.

The term ‘Payment Institution’ is defined by the relevant EU Directive as a legal person that has been authorised to provide and execute payment services throughout the EU.

In the Republic of Cyprus, the provision of payment services is regulated by the Provision and Use of Payment Services and Access to Payment Systems Law of 2018 to 2023.

Payment services

The payment services that can be offered by a Payment Institution are listed below:

1. Services enabling cash to be placed on a payment account as well as all the operations required for operating a payment account.
2. Services enabling cash withdrawals from a payment account as well as all the operations required for operating a payment account.
3. Execution of payment transactions, including transfers of funds on a payment account with the user’s payment service provider or with another payment service provider:
 - (a) execution of direct debits, including one-off direct debits;
 - (b) execution of payment transactions through a payment card or a similar device;
 - (c) execution of credit transfers, including standing orders.

4. Execution of payment transactions where the funds are covered by a credit line for a payment service user

- (a) execution of direct debits, including one-off direct debits;
- (b) execution of payment transactions through a payment card or a similar device;
- (c) execution of credit transfers, including standing orders.

5. Issuing of payment instruments and/or acquiring of payment transactions.

6. Money remittance.

7. Payment initiation services.

8. Account information services.

Initial Capital requirements

The legal entity which is applying for a Payment Institution license in Cyprus shall have an initial capital of at least:

- 20,000 Euro, when it intends to provide payment of services of point 6 above;
- 50,000 Euro, when it intends to provide payment of services of point 7 above;
- 125,000 Euro, when it intends to provide payment of services of points 1-5 above.

Application process

Where a legal entity intends to provide from or from within the Republic of Cyprus (the “Republic”) any of the payment services listed in points 1-7 above, an authorisation is required by the Central Bank of Cyprus (the “CBC”) for the operation of a payment institution providing the intended services.

In order to obtain the authorisation, an application should be submitted to the CBC together with all the necessary information.

The CBC grants the authorisation only to legal entities incorporated in the Republic of Cyprus, having their registered addresses and head offices in the Republic of Cyprus and carrying out at least part of their payment service businesses.

For the operation of a payment institution providing account information services as referred to in point 8 above, then an application should be submitted to the CBC for registration as an account information service provider.

Requirements

The following information should be submitted to the CBC along with the application:

- i. a programme of operations indicating the particular type of payment services;
- ii. a business plan including a forecast budget calculation for the first three financial years;
- iii. evidence of holding the required initial capital;
- iv. a description of the governance arrangements and internal control mechanisms;
- v. the organisational structure disclosing as applicable, the intended use of agents and branches;
- vi. the identity of directors and persons responsible for the management of the institution and of the payment services activities.

Payment institutions' register

The CBC maintains public register which provides the following:

- a) the payment institutions to which authorisation was granted, the agents and branches acting on their behalf; as well as the EU member states in which they have passported their activities; and
- b) the payment institutions that have been authorised by an EU competent authority and which have exercised their right of establishment or freedom to provide payment services from within the Republic.

Duration of the license

The preparation and submission of the 'Promoter's Application File' is customarily completed within six (6) to eight (8) weeks depending on the time required by the Client for the provision of the necessary information/documentation. The final decision for the authorization may take between six (6) to eight (8) months following submission date.

In some cases, the granting of an authorization may take longer at the discretion of the Central Bank of Cyprus.

HOW SCLAW TEAM CAN HELP

- Assistance in the preparation and submission of the licence application to the CBC for the authorisation as a PSP;
- Assistance in the preparation of the company's documents and business plan;
- Assistance in the preparation of the company's necessary Manuals;
- Appointment of Cypriot tax resident directors for the licensing period, so that the company could benefit from the Cyprus tax regime.

For further information or clarifications, please contact S. Constantinou & Associates LLC at info@sclaw.com.cy / +357 22 421190

HELPING BUSINESSES TO UNDERSTAND, MANAGE AND PROTECT THEIR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

"IP is a business issue, not a legal issue."

— Nick Kounoupias

ABOUT US

Kounoupias IP is an international business consultancy with over 37 years experience based in both London and Nicosia, Cyprus, specialising in Intellectual Property and providing strategic guidance on the full spectrum of IP services.

We work closely with our clients to help them understand, manage and protect their IP and to enable them to develop a long-term IP strategy aligned with their commercial objectives. We also provide insight, intelligence and training on IP issues to enable our clients to keep ahead of their competitors, especially in light of Brexit.

Each assignment we are instructed upon is different. So we assemble the appropriate team tailored to each case. KIP can call upon specialist IP services provided by Solicitors, Barristers, Forensic Accountants, Trademark and Patent Agents, Corporate Investigators and Public Affairs Specialists.

We are a professional business service and not a law firm, so we don't charge lawyers rates. What's more there is no fee for an initial consultation, so why not contact us to find out more?



WHY WORK WITH US ON IP?

We know IP. We understand better than anyone the economic and strategic value of IP and we can help you identify, protect and monetise this value.

Family Law

How to divorce proof trusts

By Nick Gova, Partner at Spector Constant & Williams

Families are starting to pre-emptively set up structures to protect family wealth but doing so improperly could expose such structures to divorce proceedings, thereby detrimentally impacting hard earned, well established and even generational family wealth. Divorce proceedings can rock any family unit, even one of the strongest structures.

Family wealth could be described as a townhouse building - owned by a multi-generational family. A staircase flows through each floor. The ground floor could be seen as the foundation and the source of the family wealth, without which there would be nothing. Their hard work and perseverance has lead to the family being able to progress and build their lives. The first floor is often seen as the first or second generation in the family who have benefitted from the tireless efforts of the first generation. They are able to capitalise on investments and the savings built. The second floor and residents of the top floor ultimately benefit from everything. They have the

initial foundations built by the ground floor, further enhanced by the first floor.

Such a property requires stability. For example, you would not decide to build such a property in an earthquake zone. If you had absolutely no choice but to build in an earthquake zone, you would ensure your structure had sufficient flexibility to withstand a powerful shock.

It is usually envisaged that any generation of the family would have access to wealth but with a view to preserving such wealth for future generations. In the event, such structures are created in an earthquake zone they should be capable of adapting and, if necessary, absorbing a certain amount of damage without compromising their structural integrity.

You would always get building and contents insurance for your property. In the same way, you should put in place relevant mechanisms to protect family wealth in the event of a divorce.

POINTS TO NOTE

There is a large level of discretion within family Courts. Some Judges will have little knowledge or understanding of trust structures . There are also limitations on the level of disclosure or compliance a Court can compel from individuals or trustees. Conversely, some Judges are extremely well versed with trust structures.

Trustees have little influence on which divorce jurisdiction a beneficiary to the trust may use or can use. It is always worth considering the following:

1. Reviewing the likely family court jurisdiction that would apply to each of their beneficiaries at the time the trust is established.
2. In the event that any individual who is beneficiaries to the trust is considering a move abroad, further thought will need to be given to whether they are potentially entering a more hostile family

3. If the beneficiary to the trust is considering (re)marriage, it would be worth factoring in the intended spouse's background including their nationality, domicile as well as habitual residence.
4. Stay aware of any marital situations so that the trustees can be warned as early as possible of any potential difficulties.

THE FAMILY COURT

Family courts often have extensive powers in relation to trustees and trust assets:

1. Power to compel disclosure. Parties to financial remedy proceedings on divorce are subject to a "duty of full and frank disclosure" in relation to their financial affairs, this goes further than simply providing information that is in one's possession or knowledge. A beneficiary will be expected to request information from trustees regarding the extent of trust assets and the likelihood that a request for assistance will be agreed to.
2. Trustees can be joined as party to the proceedings. This commonly happens where a beneficiary is being obstructive and or failing to provide the necessary or ordered information. The Family Court can then require the trustees to provide information regarding the trust assets. Such proceedings tend to be considered preliminary issues but can detract from the overriding objective. The costs position on such litigation is different to the approach in family proceedings that each party bears their own costs.
3. Vary the terms of a trust if that trust is found to be a "nuptial settlement". This is defined as "a settlement for the benefit of one or both of the parties or their children, created because of the marriage, or referring to the marriage, whether

made before the marriage (ante-nuptial settlement) or after it (post-nuptial settlement)". Such variation of trust can include reinstating a spouse who has been removed from the class of beneficiaries, or requiring the trustees to make a distribution to a beneficiary to pay off his or her spouse.

4. The Court is able to "pierce the corporate veil" in order to ascertain the underlying beneficial ownership of assets held in complex structures.
5. The Family Court will often who the true beneficiary of a trust is and look to meet the need a divorcing party rather than interfere with the potential benefits of future generations.
6. Letters of Wishes tend to be utilised and sought within family proceedings. The Family Court is very likely to want to see Letters of Wishes, as they often reveal the real intended beneficiaries and how they will benefit. It is essential to draft them carefully, and with this in mind. They should not be changed when a marriage break-up is in prospect.

NUPTIAL AGREEMENTS

A nuptial agreement can perform a number of useful tasks in an asset-protection context. the principal purpose of a nuptial agreement is to set out the terms on which the couple agree their financial claims should be resolved in the event of divorce. Such an Agreement can assist in the following way:

1. Fixing jurisdiction
A nuptial agreement will typically contain clauses in which the parties agree to submit to a particular jurisdiction. They provide powerful evidence of the parties' intentions at the time they signed the agreement and can be helpful if

jurisdiction becomes contested.

2. Fixing choice of law
A nuptial agreement will typically contain a 'choice of law' clause. This will specify the law which is to be applied when interpreting and giving effect to the agreement, regardless of where the divorce takes place.
3. Punitive costs
Agreements will frequently contain a clause specifying that a party who seeks to challenge a nuptial agreement in court should be required to pay the other party's costs.
4. Confidentiality
Nuptial agreements will typically contain extensive confidentiality clauses.

In addition to the above, for international couples, care should be taken, wherever possible, to ensure the nuptial agreement will be upheld in each state which could potentially have jurisdiction to hear the divorce.

In England, the Supreme Court considered whether nuptial agreements should be upheld in the landmark case of *Radmacher v Granatino*. Their conclusion was that they should, subject to some conditions being met, more specifically, there should not be any undue influence or pressure to sign, there should be a reasonable level of disclosure, each party should have independent specialist legal advice and the agreement should be fair. Other provisions could include a change of circumstances and a review clause.

The first step to safeguarding any trust would be to require the beneficiary to enter into a qualifying Nuptial Agreement. A clause can be included within any trust to cater for the same. There are times where this may be disadvantageous so such a provision

could be waived. Failure to enter into an agreement could result in the trust being depleted or the intended beneficiary receiving less as a result of family proceedings.

The Family Court will ultimately decide on how matters between a couple is resolved. It should be noted that a pre-nuptial agreement cannot be enforced in the same way as a contract, since the court will always retain the ability to decide whether it would be fair to hold the parties to the terms of the agreement. Even if a nuptial agreement is challenged, however, it is likely that it will result in a far more restricted award than if there were no agreement.

PROTECTION

When establishing a Trust, from a Family Law perspective, the trustees should carefully consider the following:

1. The appropriate jurisdiction for structures and investments. For example, you would not want to set up a vehicle in the Cayman Islands, when the underlying asset is a property in England.
2. Get advice from a financial adviser in the appropriate jurisdiction.
3. Consider the class of beneficiaries and if separate trusts or sub-trusts should be created to ease the potential damage to wider structures.
4. Will a new or existing structure be considered.
5. Assess whether a new or existing structure risks being considered a "nuptial settlement".
6. Require all beneficiaries to enter into a nuptial agreement to protect the trusts.
7. Ensure Letters of Wishes are drafted properly with a possibility that it will be viewed by a Family Judge.

It is important to consider the impact of divorce on a trust and what steps can be taken to mitigate future issues.

If you would like some assistance with any family law issue, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Five things to consider before buying property overseas

By Richard Kleiner LLP, Partner in Gerald Edelman LLP and Gerald Edelman Deal Advisory

Exploring new destinations can be great. However, there's nothing like having a home-from-home where you can get to know the locals, host your friends, and perfect that language you've always wanted to learn.

The appeal of owning property overseas is strong, and many people choose to snap up foreign homes. If you've made the decision to join them in this endeavour, you may be dreaming of all the beautiful destinations where you can base yourself in a new abode.

However, it's important to balance your idealistic ambitions with a practical approach to getting a property acquisition over the line.

To ensure your overseas home can be a valuable asset to you as well as a source of fun, it's wise to consider a few things before taking the plunge.

1. Consider a property's potential for resale

With so many sun-drenched terraces to compare and homeware sites to browse, working out the future resale value of any homes you're interested in is likely to be far down your to-do list.

However, by taking a bit of time to assess its resale potential, you can protect your bank account for years to come.

Whilst the usual pulls of home-soil housing like nearby schools, the location of your family, and a big Sainsbury's close by may not apply in this context, there are still a few common aspects of overseas homes which can add substantial value to a property in the long run. Convenient access to transport, shops, and beautiful nature can add heaps of value to a holiday bolthole. Furthermore, if a new train station or airport is set to be built nearby in a few years' time, even better.



2. Look for destinations which are investing in infrastructure

Further to our advice above, it's wise to consider buying property in locations which are sites of ongoing investment in local infrastructure. After all, it doesn't make much sense considering destinations which have limited potential, both at home and abroad.

It costs a pretty penny to buy property overseas, so you'd ideally want to see exciting new businesses and local interest appearing in your new surroundings. Equally, you'll also want your home to grow in value as you've invested in property which sits in a desirable location.

Post-pandemic, tourism is becoming more important than ever as countries catch up with the dip in revenue from the sector. Owing to this, there are countless resorts and cities that are allocating substantial amounts of money to improving their locale and sustaining its appeal.

3. Consider buying in a location with dual seasonality

When you're back on home soil for a while, it would be prudent to rent out your overseas property to provide some much-needed assistance in covering any bills you'll still owe.

In some instances, people are only able to make that milestone property purchase if they can draft in a tenant for a portion of the year.

To offer flexibility in when you can visit your new abode, it would be wise to choose a destination which has dual seasonality. This will make your home-from-home an attractive place to visit for the entire year, ultimately improving your chances of making some quick cash whenever you need it, and being able to visit in summer instead of needing to rent it out.

4. Use a currency specialist

Let's face it, not many of us have the cash to buy a second property outright. For this reason, an overseas mortgage may be necessary to facilitate overseas property purchases.

What's more, you may need to make other regular payments related to your new house. All of these payments will, unfortunately, expose you to market volatility across the currency of the country your new home is in, and the pound.

By bringing in some assistance from a currency specialist, you'll be able to avert exchange rate fluctuations having a negative impact on your objectives and plans. Above all else, you'll need to consult with a professional who can work with you to create a workable currency strategy, hopefully saving you some money.

5. Take advantage of low interest rates

In 2023, interest rates have hardly been stable. However, you may find that interest rates in certain foreign countries can offer a much more reliable bet.

If you're able, it may be worth locking in a low mortgage rate which could grow your overall budget for your overseas property. You never know, this could enable you to look for a larger or more high-spec property than you envisaged.

If you would like to learn more about buying property overseas, please contact Richard Kleiner or our property team via propertysector@geraldedelman.com.



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In a Barbie world Protecting your IP

It's not all about "come on Barbie lets go party". For intellectual property lawyers, Barbie is probably the most aggressively protected and fought over intellectual property for years. From a kids doll born back in 1959, to the blockbuster Hollywood film of 2023, it became an empire that turned the American owner company Mattel to worth billions.

According to the EUIPO, the Barbie dynasty has 23 trademarks which are registered in the EU and approximately 30 in the United Kingdom. The Barbie products are patented and industrially protected and because of the movie, Mattel has now signed hundreds of licensing contracts for the use, production and sale of products of the Barbie brand, such as O.P.I Barbie nail polish, Gap's Barbie wear, a Burger King pink sauce and others.

But really it was an IP dispute that was the stepping stone that made Barbie such a commercial success. Back in 1956, Ruth Handler, Mattel co-founder, while on holiday in Europe with her children – ironically, Barbara

and Kenneth - saw Bild Lilli a German toy doll. Enthralled by its effect on her children, she returned to the United States and designed Barbie. The owners of the Lilli doll filed a claim against Mattel in 1961, arguing that the design of Barbie infringed on their hip-joint patent and accused Mattel of misleading the public by

But really it was an IP dispute that was the stepping stone that made Barbie such a commercial success.

creating the impression that they had originated the format. The case was settled with Mattel purchasing the copyright and patent rights for the Lilli Doll. This is what allowed Mattel to have exclusive right to reproduce Barbie, create apparel, sell and distribute products, create shows, cartoons and feature in movies like the Margot Robbie 2023 Barbie movie.

In a Barbie world - Protecting your IP

In essence, Barbie is a reminder of the importance of commercializing and protecting your intellectual property. It fought many legal battles throughout the years. In 1997 Mattel sued MCA Records over the Danish band Aqua's pop song "Barbie Girl" claiming trademark infringement, unfair competition and trademark dilution. The song's title referred to the doll by its name and the song's words was a parody of the "plastic world" of Barbie. Mattel lost the case. The judge found that the song was not infringing because of parody and that the use of "Barbie" fell within the "non commercial use" exception for the dilution claim. Later in 2013 Mattel lost again after a nine year copyright battle with Bratz doll maker MGA entertainment. Mattel's argument was that the Bratz doll creator, designed the concept while working for Mattel and secretly

sold the idea to MGA. MGA denied the claims and countersued. The jury concluded that Mattel did not own the idea for the Bratz line or any of the sketches that led to its creations.

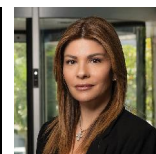
The latest battle began on the 26th of June 2023, when Mattel filed an application to the US Trademark office opposing Burberry's application to register "BRBY" for use on apparel and leather goods, claiming that it is similar to Barbie and will cause consumer confusion. It remains to be seen how another battle will be resolved.

"Barbie" is a very strong and solid example of how a robust IP strategy plays a vital role in the development and growth of companies. With the advancements in technology, the importance of IP management can only grow.

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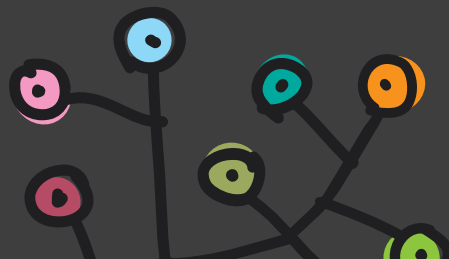




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September 2023 Property Market Update:

As we enter September 2023, the UK housing market sees the largest price drop since 2018 amid ongoing growth momentum

Examining Recent Patterns and Challenges in the UK Property Landscape

The UK's real estate sector, which has enjoyed a four-month growth streak, is displaying signs of a potential slowdown. Newly released data indicates a significant August decline in asking prices, the most pronounced since 2018. Despite robust wage increases and favourable mortgage rates, this price drop hints at improving affordability for aspiring homeowners contending with continuous borrowing costs post successive interest rate hikes by the Bank of England.

London Property Market Overview

The average property prices in London have been robust over the past year, with an overall average price of £774,779.

Sales data from the previous year indicates that flats were the dominant property type in London, commanding an average price of £592,445. Meanwhile, terraced properties achieved an average sale price of £914,743, and semi-detached properties secured a higher average price of £980,737.

London Central Property Market Overview

Property Values in W1: Real estate within the W1 postcode area recorded an average price of £2,225,665 throughout the past year.

The predominant property type sold in W1 during the recent year was flats, with an average transaction price of £2,133,601. Terraced properties achieved an average sale price of £3,674,474.

In general, property prices that changed hands in W1 over the past year experienced a decline of 20% compared to the previous year, and a 26% decrease from the peak value of £3,024,906 observed in 2019.

Please note that the provided information is a summarised overview of the property market in London.

Delving into the Data

Insights from property platform Rightmove reveal that, in the five weeks leading up to the end of August 2023, new property sellers listed at an average asking price of £364,895. This signifies a £7,012 drop compared to the previous month, marking the sharpest August decline since the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Striking a Balance: Wages and Mortgage Rates

The 1.9% dip in asking prices occurs as wage growth reaches unprecedented levels and mortgage rates become more favourable. This potentially bodes well for potential buyers grappling with high borrowing costs. Analysts cautiously express optimism that this trend might persist through the year. Prominent lender Halifax reported a 0.3% decrease in average house prices between July and June, marking the fourth consecutive monthly decrease.

Bucking the Trend: Sustained Higher Averages

Despite Rightmove's reported asking price contraction, it's important to note that the average house price remains nearly 20% higher than pre-Covid-19 levels, a significant observation from the group.

Navigating Challenges: The Affordability Factor

Tim Bannister, Director at Rightmove, highlights the ongoing challenges tied to saving for a substantial deposit and affording increased mortgage payments. While some positive economic indicators exist, the path to homeownership remains obstructed by hurdles for potential buyers.

Builder's Viewpoint: Economic Uncertainty Affects Profits

Amid shifting market dynamics, UK housebuilder Crest Nicholson provides insights into its outlook. The company anticipates substantial undershooting of full-year profit estimates due to the impact of high inflation and successive interest rate hikes. Economic uncertainty, which discourages potential homebuyers, is attributed as the cause of profit decline by Crest Nicholson.

Predictions and Optimism: Looking Ahead

Despite current challenges, Crest Nicholson maintains optimism for the future. The company projects an adjusted profit before tax of £50 million for the fiscal year ending October 31. Although this projection is notably lower than the initial £73 million estimate, the company hopes inflation will recede and mortgage rates will decrease.

Mortgage Rates and Buyer Realities

While the average five-year fixed mortgage rate has recently declined from 6.08% to 5.81% by the end of July, experts remain cautious about anticipating rates below 5% in the upcoming year. Nicholas Mendes, Mortgage Manager at John Charcol, notes that reduced mortgage costs provide some relief but only partially alleviate the financial strain accumulated over the past year. Mendes underscores that affordability will likely continue posing a significant challenge for potential homebuyers, especially considering the gap between average wages and property prices.

Sales Trends: In-Depth Analysis

Rightmove's data spotlights a 15% drop in agreed-upon sales during this period compared to 2019, largely due to high borrowing costs. Notably, properties often sought by first-time buyers exhibited greater resilience, experiencing only a 10% decline during the same period.

Perspective of First-Time Buyers

Properties traditionally attractive to first-time buyers experienced a 1% annual drop in asking prices. In contrast, average advertised rents for similar properties rose by 12%, further illuminating the intricate dynamics of the current housing market.

The buy to Let Market

The UK Buy-to-Let market has suffered from incremental changes, that have accelerated in recent years, forcing a large number of private landlords to exit the market.

From 2016, the changes have not only made rental properties less and less appealing, but for many landlords, the changes in tax rules, plus 14 interest rises in a row, have made the ownership of BTL properties a liability for many landlords, who are actually paying out more than they are receiving in rents.

Add to this the fact that due to the mass exodus of landlords, the courts are backed up for well over nine months, preventing exiting landlords from taking possession of their properties in order to sell.

This has been a catastrophe for the housing market, leaving hundreds of thousands of tenants with nowhere to rent.

Changes Affecting the Buy to Let Market:

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS

- 2003: REMOVAL OF CGT INDEXATION RELIEF
- 2016: 3% STAMP DUTY SURCHARGE
- 2016: INCREASE IN CGT RATES ON PROPERTY TO 18% & 28%
- 2016: REMOVAL OF 10% WEAR AND TEAR ALLOWANCE
- 2017-2021: PHASING OUT OF MORTGAGE INTEREST RELIEF
- 2019-2028: FREEZING OF INCOME TAX RATES
- 2023-2024: REDUCTION OF CGT ALLOWANCE
- 2024: THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RENTERS REFORM BILL*
- 2024: BANNING OF EVICTIONS UNDER SECTION 21*
- 2025: EPC RATING OF C REQUIRED FOR ALL NEW LETS*
- 2028: EPC RATING OF C REQUIRED FOR ALL LETS*

*PROPOSED

The Renters Reform Bill

A Bill to make provision changing the law about rented homes, including provision abolishing fixed term assured tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies; imposing obligations on landlords and others in relation to rented homes and temporary and supported accommodation; and for connected purposes.

The introduction of open-ended tenancies on top of the sweeping changes have forced many landlords to exit the market, although when and if this will be passed, is still unclear.

Stress Tests

When seeking a buy-to-let mortgage, the process involves more than demonstrating that your rental income covers your monthly mortgage payments. Instead, you'll need to undergo a lender's stress test, which evaluates your ability to manage the mortgage under challenging conditions. The stress income cover ratio (SICR) is the metric lenders use to gauge your suitability for a buy-to-let (BTL) mortgage. This ratio considers the amount you wish to borrow, the rental income you anticipate, and the interest associated with the loan.

While it may appear complex, understanding how this stress test influences lenders' decisions can provide insights into the approval likelihood of your BTL mortgage application. Here's a breakdown of key points:

Why Lenders Apply the 'Stressed' ICR to BTL Mortgages:

Lenders treat BTL mortgages differently from residential mortgages due to higher interest rates and reliance on rental income. The sum you can borrow for a BTL mortgage hinges on your projected rental income. Since 2017, regulatory changes by the Prudential Regulatory Authority (PRA) have made lenders adhere to stricter criteria for BTL borrowers. These criteria include a rental income 'buffer' of either 125% or 145%, known as the income cover ratio (ICR), ensuring surplus income covers expenses like repairs and service charges. Additionally, lenders perform a 'stress test,' assessing your ability to handle an interest rate of 5.5% to 6%, even if the actual mortgage rate is lower. This stress test, the stress income cover ratio (SICR), prepares for potential interest rate increases.

Calculating the SICR for a BTL Mortgage:

A standard stress test from a BTL lender utilizes a Stress Interest Cover Ratio (SICR) around 5.5% and a Rental Cover Rate of 125%-145%.

For a £200,000 loan with a stressed ICR of 5.5% and rental cover at 125%:

Step 1: Calculate the annual interest.

Loan amount £150,000 × ICR 5.5% = Annual interest of £11,000

Step 2: Determine the minimum Annual Rental Income.

Annual interest £11,000 × rental cover 125% = Minimum annual rental income £13,750, or a minimum monthly rental income of £1,146.

Consideration of Tax by BTL Lenders in Affordability Assessment:

The Prudential Regulatory Authority requires lenders to account for a borrower's income tax when assessing BTL mortgage affordability. Your tax rate influences the stressed income cover ratio used to evaluate your affordability. Basic rate taxpayers usually face a stressed income cover ratio of 125%, as their rental income carries less tax burden. Higher rate taxpayers might encounter a ratio of 145%, while additional rate taxpayers could be subjected to up to 167%. Thus, higher tax rate individuals need more rental income for a balanced outcome.

Outcome of Failing the Stressed ICR Test:

Failing a lender's standard stressed ICR test doesn't necessarily result in an outright mortgage rejection. Some specialized lenders adopt a more flexible stance to address a stressed ICR deficiency. This practice is termed 'Top Slicing,' wherein a lender evaluates diverse income and wealth sources to ensure you can manage mortgage payments even during adverse circumstances. Although not all lenders endorse this approach, expert mortgage brokers possess connections with those who do. Other factors influencing lender leniency include a lower loan-to-value ratio or the availability of longer-term mortgage products.

For portfolio landlords, lenders might consider a broader perspective. If one property in the portfolio generates weaker rental income, stronger properties could compensate for the shortfall.

Conclusion: Autumn 2023 Property Market Update: Navigating Shifting Dynamics

The Autumn of 2023 has brought both intriguing developments and potential challenges to the UK property market. Amidst a recent growth streak, signs of a possible slowdown have emerged, with the most notable being a substantial drop in housing prices in August—the most significant August decline since 2018. This update delves into recent trends, their implications, and the challenges faced by both buyers and sellers in the evolving landscape.

Growth Momentum and Recent Slowdown: An Overview

The UK's real estate sector had been riding a wave of growth for four consecutive months. However, the most recent data highlights a potential change in trajectory. August witnessed a remarkable decline in asking prices, signalling a potential slowdown. This shift is significant not only due to its magnitude but also because it contrasts with the recent trends of continuous growth. The decrease raises questions about the factors influencing this change and its potential impact on the market's overall health.

Affordability and Changing Borrowing Costs

The observed price drop could potentially improve affordability for prospective homebuyers. This is particularly relevant as the housing market has been grappling with rising borrowing costs following a series of interest rate hikes by the Bank of England. Robust wage increases and favourable mortgage rates have offered some respite, potentially making property ownership more feasible for a wider range of buyers. The shift in affordability dynamics, as highlighted by the price drop, underscores the intricate relationship between borrowing costs, wages, and property prices.

London's Property Market Resilience

In London, the property market remains robust with an average property price of £774,779 over the past year. Flats dominate the sales landscape, commanding an average price of £592,445. Terraced properties achieved an average sale price of £914,743, while semi-detached properties garnered an even higher average of £980,737. These figures showcase the diverse and dynamic nature of London's property market, reflecting varying preferences and demands among buyers.

Challenges and Optimism: Looking Ahead

The housing market's current trajectory raises questions about the potential impact on buyers, sellers, and investors. Notably, the Buy-to-Let (BTL) market has undergone significant changes in recent years, presenting challenges for landlords and impacting the availability of rental properties. While the overall property market is experiencing fluctuations, it's crucial to highlight the cautious optimism exhibited by industry experts and companies like Crest Nicholson. Adjustments and projections are being made in response to evolving economic conditions and the changing regulatory landscape.

Stress Testing and its Influence on the Buy-to-Let Market

A closer look at the Buy-to-Let (BTL) market reveals the significance of stress testing for potential borrowers. The stress test assesses an individual's ability to manage a mortgage under challenging conditions, accounting for factors such as interest rate increases. This approach safeguards lenders against potential financial instability and ensures borrowers can manage their mortgage commitments even in adverse scenarios. By understanding the stress test's impact on borrowing and affordability, potential property investors can navigate the application process more effectively.

As the property market faces changing conditions, both buyers and sellers must navigate uncertainty with careful consideration. From fluctuations in prices to shifts in affordability dynamics, every aspect of the market landscape requires informed decision-making. The changing borrowing costs, regulatory changes, and evolving economic conditions underscore the importance of staying well-informed and seeking professional advice when making property-related decisions. As we move forward, adapting to these shifts while maintaining a long-term perspective will be crucial for all stakeholders in the property market.

Antony Antoniou
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Why retirement planning matters

By Nick Cairns, Partner, Blevins Franks



Whether you are nearing retirement or it is a few years away, it is never too early to start thinking about planning for your golden years. And once retired, you should regularly review your arrangements to ensure you continue meeting your retirement goals.

You may enjoy spending time in Cyprus and would like to relocate there. Or perhaps you already live on the island but are unsure what your options are. Whatever your situation, what do you need to think about and plan for?

Approaching retirement

Make sure you are on the right track by asking yourself the following questions. There may be steps you can take today to help make your retirement goal a reality.

- Will I be able to afford to retire when I want to?
- What is the best and most tax-efficient strategy for withdrawing from my business?
- What options do I have for my pensions?
- Will I be able to retain my existing wealth and assets?
- Do I want to spend my retirement abroad?

Let's say that you plan to retire in Cyprus soon. You may have concerns about whether you can afford your preferred lifestyle without having to sell existing assets. Perhaps you have a business to sell and are unsure how best to convert your years of hard work into a retirement nest egg. Then there are the residence and tax implications (or opportunities in the case of Cyprus) of relocating to a new country.

Here, professional financial advice can prove invaluable, especially with an adviser who understands Cyprus well. They can take a holistic view of what you have – your savings, investments, assets, pensions – together with what you want – your timeline, income requirements, legacy wishes – and an objective assessment of who you are – your circumstances, goals, risk appetite – to design a personalised retirement and/or relocation plan for you.

Already retired

Regular reviews allow you to adapt your strategy to suit your changing circumstances and goals. It enables you to keep up with the ever-changing tax and pensions landscape, including new opportunities that could work in your favour (for example the UK lifetime allowance being currently abolished).

Your pension options

Pensions are usually the foundations of retirement, so deciding what to do here may be one of life's most important financial decisions. Pensions are complex and there is more choice than ever, so take regulated, specialist advice before making pension decisions to protect your benefits and establish the best option for you.

You might benefit from consolidating several UK pensions into one to provide a coherent, more cost-effective investment platform for your retirement income.

Britons moving or resident abroad may have the option of transferring UK pensions to a Qualifying Overseas Pension Scheme (QROPS). Doing so can unlock advantages you do not always get with UK pensions, such as flexibility to take income in euros and more freedom to pass benefits to chosen heirs.

Relocating to Cyprus

If you plan to retire in Cyprus, review your relocation strategy early. You need to consider your residence status and cross-border tax implications in a post-Brexit world and adapt your estate planning to suit the Cyprus inheritance rules.

And when reviewing and weighing up all the options for your pension funds, it's important to take the local Cyprus tax regime into account.

The good news is that relocating to Cyprus provides tax advantages. There is no capital gains tax on shares, company shareholdings and foreign property – so it pays to wait until you are resident in Cyprus before disposing of UK assets); interest can be tax free for 17 years; there is no inheritance tax, and foreign pensions are taxed favourably.

Careful planning is the key to minimising taxation and maximising the available opportunities so you can enjoy the retirement you want for as long as you need.

Blevins Franks has 45 years' experience advising UK nationals relocating and living abroad, with an office in Cyprus for 20 years. We also have offices in London and across Europe, and an extensive team of tax, investments, and pensions specialists. We take a holistic approach, and our integrated advice covers tax and estate planning, savings and investments, and pensions.

Contact us to find out how we can help you plan your relocation to Cyprus.

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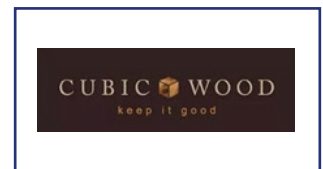
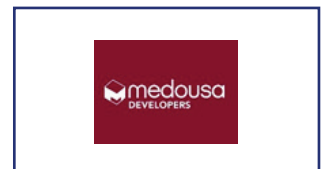
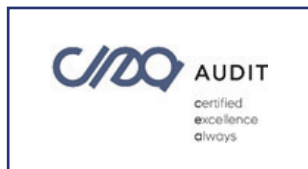
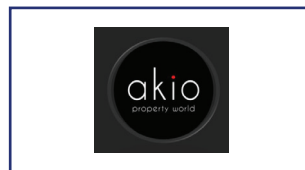
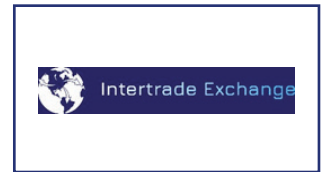
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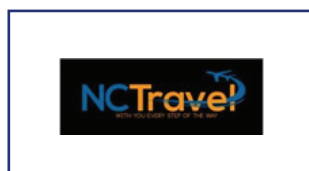
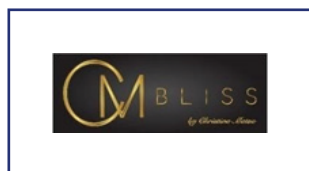
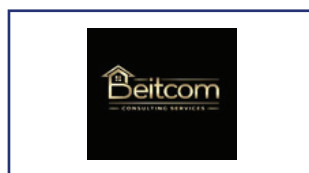
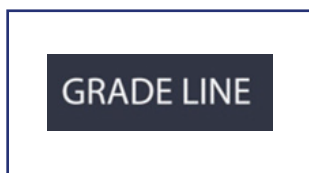
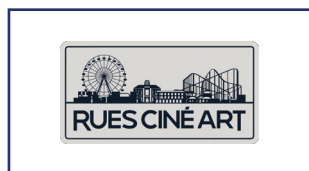
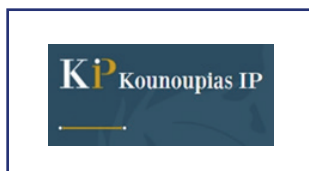
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