

# Ourania Dionysiou

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## Summary

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Globally recognized executive and strategist with close to two decades of leadership across capital systems, partnerships and institutional growth strategies in 45+ countries. A former diplomat, UN and INGO leader, and trusted Advisor to Fortune 500s, she has mobilized over \$5B in philanthropic capital and blended finance, driving transformation at the intersection of innovation, influence and impact.

Known for combining strategic foresight with disciplined execution, she had brokered award-winning alliances across finance, technology, healthcare, education, climate and humanitarian affairs. Her expertise spans AI-enabled innovation, ESG-aligned investment and philanthropic strategy- helping governments, corporations and global institutions align capital and purpose for sustainable growth and measurable impact.

She also serves as an Adjunct Associate Professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), where she teaches on International Financial Institutions (IFIs) strategy as part of the Capstone program, bridging real-world capital systems experience with applied policy innovation.

## Experience

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### **OD Advisory | Founder & Principal Advisor (Global) 2024 – Present**

- A global advisory practice specializing in capital strategy, partnerships and innovation across the public, private and philanthropic sectors.
- Advises multinationals, family offices and international institutions on capital architecture, strategic philanthropy, ESG and engagement with the UN system, helping organizations align product, policy and purpose for sustained performance.
- Designed next-generation financial and partnership frameworks for organizations including the World Health Organization (WHO), Google, Mercy Corps, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), IPPF and global philanthropic investors, advancing multi-sector collaboration and systems-level change.
- Supported governments and corporate foundations in embedding social responsibility and innovation portfolios, linking financial and reputational capital for measurable impact and engaging employees, associates and consumers.
- Clients include UN agencies, tech and fintech companies, development institutions, private foundations, philanthropists and investors spanning Europe, the Gulf and North America.

### **Columbia University, SIPA | Adjunct Associate Professor (New York, USA) 2025- Present**

- Teaches International Financial Institutions (IFI) strategy, focusing on the World Bank, IMF and evolving global financing architectures (Capstone).
- Bridges real-world capital systems experience with applied policy innovation, helping graduate students at the Capstone program, navigate the intersection of public, private and philanthropic finance.

### **International Rescue Committee | VP, International Partnerships and Philanthropy 2019- 2024 VP, Global Partnerships and Philanthropic Services (New York, USA)**

- First-ever VP of International Partnerships and Philanthropy at the IRC. Drove 3X revenue growth in Year 1 of leadership of teams, achieving \$1B+ in cumulative revenue.
- Built and led IRC's largest global two-team partnerships division (145 professionals/ close to 30 countries / \$15M budget) with \$15M annual budget accountability.
- Led the global expansion, diversification, and institutionalization of IRC's corporate, philanthropic, institutional (foundations) and HNWI engagement strategy, building a multi-sector, cross-border portfolio of high-impact partnerships.
- Founded and led IRC's first-ever global shared-services division (GPPS), overseeing \$300M annually across 18 strategic functions, including corporate sponsorships, compliance, impact reporting, ESG

partnerships, prospect management and research, market intelligence, workplace giving, Gifts-In-Kind, operational partnerships etc.

- Secured landmark multi-million-dollar partnerships positioning IRC as a preferred partner for high-impact philanthropy, including:
  - \$100M LEGO Foundation & \$50M IKEA Foundation deals.
  - IRC's first-ever major gifts in Asia, Africa, and EMEA.
  - First operational AI-driven humanitarian partnership (2023 Better Satellite World Award).
  - Pioneered cryptocurrency, NFT, gaming partnerships, Islamic and DAF philanthropy, impact investing for the organization.
  - Led high-value industry partnerships spanning finance (BlackRock, Citi, JP Morgan, HSBC), tech (Google, Microsoft, Salesforce), healthcare (Pfizer, Novartis, J&J), luxury & retail (LVMH, Nike, Cartier), sports & gaming (NFL, Nintendo, Xbox), and top-tier foundations (Rockefeller, Bloomberg, Dubai Cares, CIFF, Hilton).
- Regularly represented IRC in global thought-leadership forums, advocating for innovative financing, ESG-driven investments, the future of philanthropy, tech-enabled giving, and corporate social impact.
- Served as a key member of the leadership team, advising the CEO and board on global growth strategy, institutional positioning and external engagement across regions; served as the staff focal point for the board's nominating and governance committee; and co-led the development committee of the board.

**United Nations | Global Strategic Growth Advisor (Switzerland, Denmark, USA) 2017-2019**

- Advised C-suite and governance boards on strategic growth, capital diversification and institutional transformation.
- Designed and executed multi-million, multi-year fundraising and investment strategies, including high-value giving portfolios, innovative finance models, and impact investing.
- Spearheaded global development strategy and business transformation initiatives, optimizing institutional resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, and cross-sector collaboration.
- Clients included UNHCR, USA for UNHCR, WHO, UNICEF, the IRC, private banking institutions, and corporate foundations, shaping strategic partnerships and financial sustainability initiatives.

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) | Head of Partnerships, Gulf Area (Dubai, UAE) 2013-2017**

- Led UNICEF's market expansion and strategic partnerships across the GCC (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain), securing \$300M+ annually, with a 6X revenue growth in Year 1 alone.
- Negotiated and closed multi-million-dollar deals, including UNICEF's largest-ever private-sector education grant (\$200M) and its largest healthcare investment from the Saudi royal family.
- Developed and executed UNICEF's regional resource mobilization strategy, overseeing a team across five markets, managing an annual budget of \$2.5M, and leading organizational restructuring for operational efficiency.
- Directed corporate positioning and external affairs, collaborating with PR firms, marketing agencies, and government relations teams to strengthen UNICEF's regional brand and advocacy efforts.
- Established UNICEF's first-ever Ultra-High-Net-Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) strategy in the Gulf, driving a 636% increase in major donations in Year 1 and facilitating strategic engagement at Royal Court and ministerial levels.
- Regularly represented UNICEF in global forums and expert panels, advising stakeholders on venture philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, and strategic philanthropy.
- Championed innovation in child development and education through technology and philanthropic partnerships.

**United Nations | Strategic Partnerships & Resource Mobilization Consultant (Abu Dhabi, UAE) 2011-2013**

- Developed the World Food Program (WFP)'s 5-year Resource Mobilization Strategy for sustainable engagement with GCC governments and private-sector donors (2013–2017), securing long-term funding pipelines and investment commitments.
- Led high-level stakeholder engagement, conducting 40+ in-depth interviews with government officials, financial institutions, and corporate leaders to shape strategic fundraising action plans.
- Developed UNHCR's external relations and communications strategy for the Gulf, optimizing branding, stakeholder engagement, and operational alignment through SWOT analysis and regional strategy retreats.

- Led the first-ever humanitarian ecosystem mapping for the Gulf (UN OCHA), overseeing a team of senior international consultants to analyze key actors and provide strategic recommendations for resource mobilization and institutional engagement.
- Orchestrated OCHA's Gulf Liaison Office outreach, crafting the 2013 strategic plan for the UN Secretary-General's Humanitarian Envoy in Kuwait and supporting the International Global Pledging Conference for Syria, which mobilized global donor commitments.
- Spearheaded digital transformation initiatives, overseeing the revamp of ArabHum—the first Arabic-language humanitarian platform, improving visibility and engagement across the region.

**Presidential Palace, Republic of Cyprus | Advisor on Communications Strategy & Policy- EU  
Presidency Secretariat (Nicosia, Cyprus) 2010-2011**

- Led the strategic communications and public affairs strategy preparations for Cyprus' first-ever EU Presidency, advising the Head of the Secretariat on communications policy, external positioning, and diplomatic engagement.
- Designed and executed the EU-wide communication framework, overseeing branding, digital strategy, media relations, crisis management, and stakeholder engagement to align national and EU priorities.
- Conducted 100+ high-level stakeholder engagements with EU Commissioners, policymakers, diplomats, and media leaders, synthesizing key public affairs objectives to shape Cyprus' Presidency agenda.
- Managed public procurement and multi-million-dollar tenders for strategic communications staffing, overseeing partnerships with global PR, marketing, and market analysis firms (APCO Worldwide, Ampersand, GNORA Communications).
- Represented Cyprus in bilateral negotiations with EU Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Trio Presidency, and private-sector leaders, driving collaboration on policy, economic affairs, and strategic partnerships.

**Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus to the USA | Director of Press & Public Affairs (Washington DC, USA) 2008-2010**

- Led external positioning, strategic communications, and public affairs for Cyprus in the U.S., overseeing media relations, policy advocacy, and stakeholder engagement at the EU Commission, U.S. State Department, and international diplomatic circles.
- Developed and executed Cyprus' U.S. communication strategy, expanding media outreach, publications, and digital engagement—boosting U.S. press coverage by 300% in the first six months.
- Served as the Republic's primary spokesperson to U.S. and EU policymakers, journalists, and lobbyists, briefing media on policy developments and representing Cyprus in bilateral and multilateral engagements.
- Managed the Embassy's Press & Information Office and external public affairs partnerships, overseeing a global PR firm (Qorvis Communications) and government lobbyists (Patton Boggs) to enhance diplomatic and policy influence.

**JHU University | Research Assistant to Head of Int. Law (Washington DC, USA) 2007-2008**

- Developed the department's first-ever digital knowledge-sharing platform, enhancing collaboration, research accessibility, and internal communications within Johns Hopkins' International Law Department.
- Advised on digital strategy and information management, streamlining legal research dissemination and academic engagement.
- Designed and delivered negotiation, conflict resolution, and reconciliation training as part of the "Peacekidz Program", influencing local education policy and curriculum development for conflict management.
- Contributed to the revision of JHU's conflict resolution training manual, ensuring alignment with global best practices in negotiation and peacebuilding.

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Intern – Conflict Management & EU Security Policy Division 2006-2007**

- Conducted policy research and analysis on UN regulations, NATO policies, and EU defense strategy, assessing their impact on regional security and crisis management.
- Prepared analytical reports on multilateral negotiations, contributing to policy recommendations on EU Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and international conflict resolution frameworks.

## **Multinational Corporations | Business Development Advisor (Cyprus)**

**2004-2006**

- Developed market entry and expansion strategies for public and private sector entities, facilitating cross-border trade and investment partnerships.
- Advised on international business development, including a global partnership between a multinational firm and Cyprus-based startups, driving market access and revenue growth.
- Designed and executed marketing strategies for trade corporations, optimizing engagement with international Chamber of Commerce networks to enhance business relations and investment opportunities.

## **House of Representatives, Cyprus | Intern – EU Policy & Affairs**

**2003**

- Supported Cyprus' EU accession negotiations, contributing to policy documentation, regulatory alignment, and diplomatic engagements.
- Facilitated bilateral meetings with EU counterparts, assisting in negotiation preparations and cross-border policy coordination.
- Led multilingual communications, translating the House of Representatives' official website from Greek to English and French to enhance accessibility and international engagement.

## **Education**

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### **University of Chulalongkorn | Executive Certificate in Global Affairs**

**2021-2022**

**Thailand | Rotary Peace Fellow**

- One of only 20 fellows selected globally, and the first-ever Cypriot nominated by the Government of Cyprus for outstanding leadership and academic excellence.

### **Johns Hopkins University – SAIS | MA in International Relations and Economics**

**2006-2008**

**Washington, DC & Bologna, Italy | Magna Cum Laude | Minor: Conflict Resolution and International Law**

- Recipient of Class Best Student Award for New Identity theory on political negotiation- recognized by the President of the World Bank and copyrighted in US Library of Congress.
- Scholarship recipient (Luc de Smet Endowment) for exceptional leadership- first ever recipient of this prestigious award.
- Founder and President of the largest-ever student-initiated society at Johns Hopkins SAIS.

### **Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III | MA in Intercultural Studies**

**2003-2005**

**Montpellier, France | Maitrise Langues, Littératures et Civilisations Etrangères**

- Scholar of the National Fund of the Government of Cyprus due to academic excellence; one of only two students awarded admission and a full scholarship for academic excellence.

### **Ionian University- DFLTI | BA in Foreign Languages, Translation & Interpreting**

**2000-2004**

**Corfu, Greece | Magna Cum Laude**

- Scholarship recipient (Government of Cyprus & Bank of Cyprus) for academic distinction.

## **Distinctions & Awards**

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- Brussels Forum Award – German Marshall Fund (GMF), USA  
*Recognized for excellence in policy and transatlantic relations on “Immigration, Pluralism, and the Transatlantic Relationship.”*
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan – 1st Reserve Winner (Global Affairs)  
*Selected for outstanding contributions to global diplomacy and international policy.*
- Council of Europe & European Commission – Human Rights Training Representative (Spain)  
*Chosen to represent Cyprus in a select human rights education program.*
- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS, Cyprus) – Project Leader  
*Led a UN-backed bi-communal peace-building initiative, representing Cyprus at two UN educational forums.*
- Eagle Scout Award– Highest Honor of the Scouts' Movement  
*Demonstrated leadership, commitment to service, and excellence in youth leadership development. Awarded by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.*
- Alliance Française – Award for Excellence in European Policy Analysis  
*Recognized for scholarly contributions to European policy and governance.*

- World Bank President's Award – SAIS  
*Honored for developing a groundbreaking global affairs theory on negotiation and identity, later copyrighted.*
- EU Commission – Certified Negotiation Trainer  
*Trained in high-stakes negotiation strategies and EU policy advocacy.*
- Thomson Reuters Foundation – Media & Communications Fellow  
*Selected for an elite global training program in strategic communications and crisis management.*
- Crisis Management & Media Award – Johns Hopkins SAIS  
*Recognized for excellence in crisis response, media engagement, and public affairs strategy.*

## **Skills & Interests**

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### Key Skills

- EU Negotiation & Diplomacy – Certified EU negotiations trainer (Harvard, EU Council).
- Public Speaking & Thought Leadership – Award-winning speaker and published author in global public policy and strategic development.
- Strategic Influence & Multi-Sector Impact – Proven expertise in external positioning, cross-sector partnerships, and transformational social impact across global markets.
- Multilingual & Cross-Cultural Leadership – Fluent in Greek, English, and French; basic proficiency in Turkish.

### Interests & Personal Pursuits

- Culinary & Wine Expertise – Certified barista & sommelier.
- Sports & Athletics – Former national basketball player; passionate tennis enthusiast.
- Global Travel & Cultural Exploration – Avid traveler with a deep interest in global cuisine, cultures, and economic landscapes.

## **Memberships and Societies**

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The International Peace and Security Institute (IPSI)- alumni; The Fund for American Studies (TFAS)- alumni; Georgetown University- alumni; The International Institute for Political and Economic Studies; The Greek Association for Atlantic and European Cooperation; Rotary International; Mensa; World Scouts Movement.