

PRESS RELEASE



UNDP signs agreement with ALIPH Foundation: a new initiative for cultural heritage restoration to contribute to intercultural dialogue and trust building between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus.

Nicosia, 24th October 2022 – The International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) has partnered with the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the auspices of the UN Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus (OSASG) for the conservation of two cultural heritage sites: St. George of the Latins church in Famagusta and Tuzla Mosque in Larnaca. The conservation works will be carried out by UNDP within the framework of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage to support peace and trust building in Cyprus. An event was organized to mark the signing of a grant for the amount of 840,335.29 USD from ALIPH to UNDP for this project at the Home for Cooperation.

This initiative marks the first partnership between ALIPH, TCCH and UNDP. This project is co-funded by the European Union. The project builds on UNDP expertise in project implementation on cultural heritage in the island of Cyprus between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, which has resulted in the successful completion of over 100 completed projects across the island since 2010.

The Tuzla Mosque, located in the old part of Larnaca, was originally a medieval church built on the foundations of a basilica, which was converted into a mosque during the Ottoman period.

The church of Saint George of the Latins is the oldest Gothic architecture monument in Famagusta walled city and it was constructed with the intention to adapt gothic cathedral architecture to a traditional single-nave chapel existing in the region.

The structural consolidating works in both structures will be addressed within the conservation works.

In attendance at the event were Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage members, representatives from ALIPH, representatives from the European Commission and UNDP. The event included speeches from Jakhongir Khaydarov, Head of Office, UNDP Cyprus, Valéry Freland, ALIPH Executive Director, Sotos Ktoris, Greek Cypriot Co-Chair of the TCCH, Ali Tuncay, Turkish Cypriot Co-Chair of the TCCH and Mr. Philippe Baudin-Auliac, Senior Political Affairs Officer in the Office of the Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on Cyprus.

Mr. Jakhongir Khaydarov, Head of Office, UNDP Cyprus, said: “UNDP in Cyprus is very pleased to have partnered with an international foundation such as ALIPH, which shares our values when it comes to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage. We hope that in the future we continue to take on meaningful projects together.

The conservation of shared heritage greatly supports the peace and confidence building process on the island of Cyprus. As UNDP, we are committed to ensuring the protection and preservation of cultural heritage to ensure that the island’s monuments can be enjoyed by future generations. Protecting this heritage is a key pillar in building a culture of peace, understanding, cooperation, and dialogue.”

Mr. Valéry Freland, ALIPH Executive Director, said: “The symbolism of ALIPH’s first project in Cyprus is significant. Working with Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities to restore two important historical and remarkable sites embodies ALIPH’s mission: protecting heritage to build peace.”

Mr. Sotos Ktoris, Greek-Cypriot Co-Chair, Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, said: “No doubt, the decision of the board of ALIPH goes beyond financial imperatives. It is deeply first and foremost a message to peace. ALIPH’s substantive support to the work of the Technical Committee not only empowers our efforts to ensure the protection and preservation of our cultural heritage so that, through shared responsibility the island’s monuments can be enjoyed by future generations. But it also empowers our uninterrupted effort to promote intercultural understanding, reconciliation and mutual respect amongst Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.”

Mr. Ali Tuncay, Turkish-Cypriot Co-Chair, Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, said: “Cyprus is an island at the crossroads of three continents at the “furthest West of east” and “furthest East of West”. All civilisations that have passed through our island with a history that exceeds 10 thousand years have left their mark. Mycenaean, Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantine, Lusignans, Venetians, Ottomans and many other civilizations left their mark on all over the island. In short, all the monuments of these civilizations are our shared heritage and richness. As the members of the Technical Committee, we acknowledge the responsibility and duty of preserving and sustaining this richness and hand them over to future generations.”

Through its work, TCCH aims not only to restore the monuments, but also to create an atmosphere for trust, mutual understanding and a culture of peace on the island of Cyprus. Each conservation site is a reflection of the cultures behind it as well as an intersection of civilizations. The European Union is the biggest supporter of the work of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus.



For further information and media enquiries please contact UNDP at: media.cy@undp.org or Tel. +357 22874733 or +90392 2200027 and ALIPH at: sandra.bialystok@aliph-foundation.org +41 79 897 48 89



The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage works in line with the mutually agreed mechanism for the preservation of the island's common heritage. In 2009, the Advisory Board was set up by a decision of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and approved by the two leaders as the consultative body of the Committee. The aim of the Board is to protect, preserve and facilitate the preservation, physical protection and restoration (including research, study and survey) of the immovable cultural heritage of Cyprus. This mechanism allows for the practical aspects of preservation to be considered in a non-political manner so that practical measures can be taken to improve the situation on the ground.

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ALIPH

The International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) is the main global fund exclusively dedicated to the protection and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in conflict zones and post-conflict situations. It was created in 2017 in response to the massive destruction of cultural heritage over the past two decades, predominantly in the Middle East and the Sahel. ALIPH is a public-private partnership assembling several countries and private donors. Based in Geneva, this Swiss foundation also benefits of the privileges and immunities of an international organization, thanks to a headquarters agreement signed with the Swiss Confederation. To date, ALIPH has supported more than 150 projects in 30 countries on 4 continents. ALIPH finances concrete projects carried out on-the-ground, hand in hand with local partners, authorities, and communities. The ultimate goal is that cultural heritage protection contributes to peace and sustainable development.

More resources: www.aliph-foundation.org | [Twitter](#)

United Nations Development Programme

UNDP aims to contribute and support the peace-building process in Cyprus and to enhance cooperation between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriot by implementing a range of confidence building measures.

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