



Security Council

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Mission of good offices in Cyprus

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution [2587 \(2021\)](#), requested me to submit a report by 3 January 2022 on my good offices, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement. In that resolution, the Council encouraged the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to provide written updates to my mission of good offices on the actions that they had taken in support of the relevant parts of the resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 6, 7 and 9, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement, and requested me to include the contents of those updates in my report. (The updates submitted by the two leaders are contained in annexes I and II to the present report.) In paragraph 5 of that same resolution, the Council called on the two leaders to submit to me by 15 December 2021 an action plan, in coordination with the Technical Committee on Gender Equality, to increase the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace talks and to provide direct support and encouragement to civil society organizations to enhance intercommunal contact and trust-building. The Council further asked me to include that action plan in the present report.

2. The present report is focused on developments from 19 June to 15 December 2021. It provides an update on the activities carried out by my mission of good offices under the leadership of my Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus, Elizabeth Spehar, who ended her term in office on 30 November, and her successor, Colin Stewart, who formally assumed his duties on 6 December. The report also includes an update on the consultations conducted by senior United Nations official Jane Holl Lute on my behalf until the end of her engagement on Cyprus in early fall 2021, as well as the informal lunch that I hosted with the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar, in New York on 27 September.

II. Background and context

3. Since my previous report on my mission of good offices ([S/2021/634](#)), confidence in the possibility of securing a negotiated settlement continued to fall on the island from an already low level. Public debate focused on the divergent positions of the sides regarding the basis of the talks, including in the lead-up to and the



aftermath of the informal lunch that I hosted for the two leaders on 27 September. The negative rhetoric continued throughout the reporting period, with no harmonized messages that could resonate positively with both communities.

4. Internal political developments on both sides created additional challenges, with the two communities becoming more skeptical that any progress could be achieved. Furthermore, certain steps taken, in particular with respect to the fenced-off part of Varosha, contributed to deepening mistrust, both between the sides and among the two communities.

5. The epidemiological situation due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continued to fluctuate on both sides of the island. Following the decision of 2 June of the Greek Cypriot leader and the Turkish Cypriot leader to synchronize the two sides' respective COVID-19-related measures at the crossing points, the Technical Committee on Health continued to assess the situation and share epidemiological data on a biweekly basis, with agreed restrictive measures applied at the crossing points being adjusted accordingly. This close and fruitful cooperation has been welcomed across the island.

6. In addition to adverse effects on public health, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant socioeconomic impact, including in the form of rising unemployment, decreased purchasing power and far lower tourist arrivals, with a particularly marked impact on the economy in the north.

7. Deputy Special Adviser/Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Spehar conducted regular meetings with the representatives of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot leaders, supported by my mission of good offices. During these meetings, the representatives discussed confidence-building measures and exchanged views on ways to restart and revitalize the work of the technical committees, as called for by the Security Council in recent resolutions. In the context of almost weekly meetings with the Greek Cypriot negotiator, Andreas Mavroyiannis, and the Turkish Cypriot special representative, Ergün Olgun, constructive efforts were made to address the health and economic response to the pandemic. Other issues of importance were also addressed and discussed, such as the crossing points, irregular migration, increased criminality in and adjacent to the mixed village of Pyla and challenges to the completion of projects by the technical committees. Project proposals submitted to the European Union-funded facility, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to support the work of the technical committees were also regularly discussed.

8. While progress towards reaching an agreement on confidence-building measures was limited, the regular meetings and intervening contacts provided an important avenue for discussion on issues of concern, including with a view to building trust and common ground. The staff of my mission of good offices also met weekly with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot coordinators of the technical committees to keep the dialogue open, discuss the above topics and explore ways to improve the functionality of the committees and address challenges.

9. On 20 July, the Turkish Cypriot leader announced a decision that the military status of approximately 3.5 per cent of the area of Varosha would be lifted. He also encouraged Greek Cypriot property owners to apply to the Immovable Property Commission to settle their property claims in accordance with international law. The President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, pledged the support of Turkey for the decision. Those statements and developments on the ground triggered strong objections from the Greek Cypriots, who stressed that the activities in Varosha violated relevant Security Council resolutions, including [550 \(1984\)](#) and [789 \(1992\)](#), as well as previous statements by the President of the Security Council on Varosha.

For reference, my most recent report on UNFICYP (S/2021/1110) describes developments on the ground that were observed.

10. The United Nations also responded to developments related to Varosha. On 21 July, I expressed my deep concern about the announcements by the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey with respect to Varosha and called on all parties to refrain from unilateral actions that provoke tensions and may compromise the ongoing efforts to seek common ground between the parties towards a lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue. Following consultations on 21 July, the Security Council issued a presidential statement on 23 July (S/PRST/2021/13), in which it, inter alia, condemned the announcement, expressed its deep regret regarding those unilateral actions that ran contrary to its previous resolutions and statements and called for the immediate reversal of the course of action and the reversal of all steps taken on Varosha since October 2020.

11. With respect to the regional situation, the current reporting period was characterized by a renewed uptick in tensions, including with respect to planned hydrocarbon- and energy cooperation-related activity and maritime zone claims in the eastern Mediterranean, and heightened rhetoric between guarantor powers Greece and Turkey.

12. The religious leaders of Cyprus remained united and sustained their commitment to peacebuilding and reconciliation within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. They continued to meet, including virtually, and work together to advance religious freedom and human rights despite the challenging climate which has prevailed since the inconclusive closure of the Conference on Cyprus in mid-2017.

13. Representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties maintained their regular meetings under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia. Deputy Special Adviser Spehar gave an address to the political party representatives on 25 November. Due to the improved epidemiological situation on the island during the reporting period, they were able to partially return to in-person discussions. This step was welcomed by the representatives, who had repeatedly stressed the importance of personal contacts to bolster cooperation. They were also able to return to meetings in a subcommittee format, enabling more detailed discussions on potential joint confidence-building activities to be carried out by the political parties. In their joint statements on substantive topics, the political parties continued to urge the two leaders to demonstrate the necessary political will to resume substantive negotiations towards a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem.

III. Status of the process

14. Until the completion of her assignment, Ms. Lute pursued discussions with the leaders of the two communities and their representatives, as well as representatives of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. She was also in contact with representatives of the European Union. United Nations engagement with the parties on track 1 efforts also included contacts on the margins of the General Assembly in September. On 27 September, I invited the two leaders to a luncheon to discuss the state of play in efforts to reach common ground. Both leaders lent their support to my offer to appoint an envoy to pursue the search for common ground. While their substantive positions on a settlement remain far apart, the two leaders indicated an interest in continued engagement. As the views on the role and mandate of an envoy differ, efforts continue to ascertain the modalities that would best support them in the search for a way forward.

IV. Status of the process: activities of my mission of good offices

15. Deputy Special Adviser Spehar and my mission of good offices continued a proactive outreach programme with the two leaders, political parties, and civil society organizations and actors. They also held regular meetings with European Union officials, representatives of the World Bank and members of the diplomatic community. These discussions covered issues related to the peace process, the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the advancement of confidence-building measures and the resumption and revitalization of the work of the technical committees.

16. Deputy Special Adviser Spehar held several high-level meetings with visitors, including with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, on 24 June; the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, on 7 October; and the Secretary of State of Spain for the European Union, Juan González-Barba Pera, on 25 October. On 28 September, Deputy Special Adviser Spehar and my mission of good offices received a delegation from the World Bank, including to discuss the work done on the socioeconomic impact of a settlement through a gender lens.

17. Mr. Stewart, upon assumption of his duties and arrival in Cyprus, had separate introductory meetings with the two leaders. On 14 December, despite the polarized political environment and the epidemiological situation, both leaders attended the small end-of-year reception organized by the mission and had a warm informal exchange. This was the first time the two leaders met on the island this year.

18. On 15 December, Deputy Special Adviser Stewart met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, José Manuel Albares Bueno.

19. During the reporting period, the Technical Committees on Cultural Heritage, Crime and Criminal Matters, Health, Broadcasting, the Environment, and Economic and Commercial Matters remained particularly active, while committees that had hitherto been dormant, such as the Technical Committees on Gender Equality and Crisis Management, resumed their work. At the same time, other challenges – such as the composition of certain committees, the resignation of members from others and disagreements over terminology to be utilized – had a further impact on the activities of other committees, including the Technical Committees on the Environment and Education, and halted or slowed down several ongoing projects that were nearing completion. This situation has also meant that discussions on possible new initiatives and projects have taken longer than usual.

20. Nevertheless, certain successes recorded towards the end of the reporting period, in particular with the Technical Committee on Broadcasting and Telecommunication, appear to have given some impetus to finding a way forward in addressing the issue of terminology that has stalled ongoing projects in certain committees. Successes include the Committee's work on the 700 MHz frequency band and 5G. Another notable exception to the downward trend was the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, which continued its weekly meetings and successful delivery of conservation work and designs. At the 2021 European Heritage Awards/Europa Nostra Awards ceremony in Venice on 23 September, the Committee received the Grand Prix in recognition of the restoration work it had carried out, the cooperation between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots that the Committee represented and its dedication to the preservation of historic monuments on the island. A follow-up event was held in Nicosia on 8 November 2021, attended by representatives of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, the United Nations, the European Union, the diplomatic community and civil society supporters of the Committee's activities.

21. The Technical Committee on Health sustained frequent interaction between the two co-chairs and experts, who exchanged information on COVID-19-related responses, as well as epidemiological information regarding the situation on both sides, on a biweekly basis. In line with the leaders' agreement of 2 June 2021, the Committee continued to synchronize and progressively adjust the two sides' respective COVID-19-related measures concerning the crossing points and, on 10 July, 23 September and 18 November, issued press statements through the United Nations Spokesperson in Cyprus announcing adjustments to the epidemiological level and the restrictive measures to be employed.

22. While the rate of transfer of European Union-approved vaccines to the Turkish Cypriot community remained low, the Technical Committee on Health continued to be instrumental in overseeing the transfer of the vaccines between the two sides. As at 15 December, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 1,956,023 doses had been received by the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus, of which, according to the Technical Committee on Health, 234,038 doses had been transferred to the north. Work to provide Turkish Cypriots equal access to the European Union Digital COVID Certificate is ongoing but has continued to face significant challenges.

23. The Technical Committee on Education met once during the reporting period and faced challenges in the development and implementation of projects due to issues of terminology in documents produced by the Committee. However, the "Imagine" peace education project was launched on 8 November to mark the restart of activities for the 2021/22 academic year after a break due to COVID-19-related restrictions. The project is being implemented by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research and the Home for Cooperation, with the support of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and the United Nations. Several projects stalled due to disagreements on terminology, and no progress was made on conducting a joint review of school materials, including textbooks.

24. While a website developed by the Technical Committee on the Environment has not yet been launched, due to disagreements over terminology, joint environmental visits were conducted with the support of UNDP and the European Union support facility to the technical committees, and several projects and activities are currently under discussion. The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Matters met intermittently but made limited progress regarding project implementation. The Technical Committees on Crisis Management, Crossings and Culture met after a long hiatus, and the latter held a productive meeting following new Turkish Cypriot members being appointed during the reporting period.

25. In addition to the continued exchange of information on crime in both communities through the Joint Contact Room (also known as the Joint Communications Room), the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters was in discussions to organize a seminar on combating violence against women. In response to the Security Council's call for an action plan to, inter alia, increase the participation of women in peace talks, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality reached a convergence on a set of practical recommendations addressing three main questions: how to ensure the full and meaningful representation of women; how to engage with civil society, including women's organizations, to solicit their views; and how to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in a future Cyprus settlement process. While the draft recommendations were welcomed by the two leaders in their essence, agreement on a joint action plan in line with the request of the Council was unfortunately not reached, with both sides submitting their own versions of the plan on 15 December.

26. The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters met and sought to advance its agreed priorities. On 19 November, thanks to the extensive work carried out by the Technical Committee on Broadcasting and Telecommunication over the past two years, the Turkish Cypriot leader and the Greek Cypriot leader confirmed agreement on a project that will make way for the introduction of 5G across the island. The project will remove television broadcasting systems from the 700 MHz frequency band, enabling the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, with the support of the European Union, and allowing the allocation of the 700 MHz frequency band to 5G mobile services.

27. Between 13 and 15 September, Deputy Special Adviser Spehar hosted a series of events for the co-chairs and members of the technical committees to allow them to meet (some for the first time in person) or to get reacquainted. The final event in the series also saw the Greek Cypriot negotiator and the Turkish Cypriot special representative in attendance.

28. On 16 November, Deputy Special Adviser Spehar addressed the seventeenth annual Cyprus Summit, organized by *The Economist*, on “Current challenges and opportunities in the Cyprus issue”, highlighting the importance of keeping the “thread of dialogue” going on the island, as well as in the broader region, including in the business realm. She also touched on the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment, which highlighted the costs of a non-settlement and made the case for working immediately, island-wide, to increase gender parity in the contributions to and the rewards of economic development, now and once a settlement is reached. On 2 October, Deputy Special Adviser Spehar participated in a panel discussion entitled “Grass-roots peacebuilding: entrepreneurship, research and creativity” as part of the 2021 Cyprus Forum, a panel which contributed to showcasing positive examples of cooperation on the island across a variety of actors and sectors, including those involving youth.

29. During the reporting period, my mission of good offices continued to work together with UNFICYP on entrepreneurship and environmental peacebuilding initiatives and supported activities to highlight and address environmental challenges in the buffer zone and throughout the island, including through outreach to civil society. Staff from my mission of good offices participated in the second United Nations Youth Champions for Environment and Peace programme.

V. Observations

30. The passage of time continues to complicate efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution in Cyprus. I note with concern that, during this recent period, the positions of the communities appear to have become more entrenched and further apart. Since the Conference on Cyprus ended inconclusively at Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in 2017, I have met with the leaders several times, most recently at the informal lunch that I hosted in New York on 27 September. These meetings, including those involving the guarantor powers, such as the informal five-plus-one meeting¹ held in Geneva in April 2021, as well as my ongoing contacts with all stakeholders, have kept communication lines open and provided me with the opportunity to speak openly and directly with those concerned. The Deputy Special Adviser, as well as senior management at United Nations Headquarters, have also maintained continuous contact and dialogue with all parties. In these efforts, I remain guided by relevant Security Council resolutions that have established the United Nations parameters.

¹ An informal meeting of the Greek Cypriot leader, the Turkish Cypriot leader, the guarantor powers and the United Nations.

31. My mission of good offices also helps to preserve dialogue at various levels and promote a rapprochement between the communities, engaging in preventive diplomacy to guard against further worsening of the climate. Important work was done with the sides to provide support to the technical committees as they considered additional confidence-building measures and engaged on addressing serious problems on the island, including, as a priority, the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The regularity of the meetings hosted by the Deputy Special Adviser between the Greek Cypriot negotiator and the Turkish Cypriot special representative and of related discussions spearheaded by my good offices mission is positive, particularly in the light of ongoing challenges to constructive dialogue. Given the continuing absence of fully fledged negotiations, the leaders' presence at the 14 December reception in Nicosia sent a positive signal to the broader public. I encourage the two leaders and their representatives to continue engaging with each other and with the United Nations in this vein.

32. On the work of the technical committees, and with several exceptions, such as the notable accomplishments of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, the November announcement by the Technical Committee on Broadcasting and Telecommunication and the beneficial role played by the Technical Committee on Health in the context of the pandemic, I continue to consider that these bodies remain significantly underutilized. I welcome the restart of the "Imagine" peace education programme but note with concern the lack of progress on other projects under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Education, as well as in other technical committees, which could contribute considerably to rapprochement and peacebuilding, particularly among the young. It is regrettable that no progress was made on the Security Council's request to address impediments to peace by conducting a joint review of school materials, including textbooks, as a contribution to trust-building between the communities.

33. I welcome the regular exchange of epidemiological information and coordination within the Technical Committee on Health on COVID-19-related measures. Despite the harmonization of measures and adjustment of restrictions at the crossing points, important challenges remain, including regarding the proportional transfer of European Union-approved vaccines. While discussions are ongoing to provide Turkish Cypriots full and equal access to the European Union Digital COVID Certificate, progress has been slow, and more efforts are needed as a matter of priority.

34. The continued absence of substantive negotiations and the positioning of the sides regarding the basis of a settlement in Cyprus have begun to affect the work of the technical committees. Despite the calls by the Security Council for the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders to provide the necessary political support and overall guidance to free the technical committees from obstructions to their work and enable them to function effectively, decisions on activities and projects proposed by the committees, in some cases, began to mirror the lack of common ground on the way forward with respect to the peace talks.

35. In this context, I strongly urge the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders and their representatives to work together on confidence-building measures and to continue revitalizing the work of the technical committees so that they can fulfil their potential in positively affecting the daily lives of Cypriots, also in accordance with Security Council resolution [2587 \(2021\)](#). I urge the leaders and their representatives to move beyond present challenges, including those related to terminology, and instead to provide practical and political support and guidance to all the committees, with a view to enabling the full reinvigoration of their work. These mechanisms of dialogue and rapprochement are of particular importance and can, in the absence of fully fledged negotiations, rekindle hope among the population that progress between the parties can indeed still be made.

36. The work carried out by my mission of good offices has helped to convey the message that laying a foundation for peace requires people, in particular youth, to interact, engage in dialogue and build trust. The idea of cooperation on sports to bring young people together and promote interaction between the two communities via sports activities, including possibly through the establishment of a technical committee on the matter, continues to be worth considering.

37. There is a risk that the deepening of disparities between the two economies may start eroding the basis for important convergences achieved in the past, hence the need for more concerted efforts to tackle the economic fallout from the pandemic and other factors, while also promoting greater economic ties and increased intra-island trade. It is important that risks associated with the two economies further drifting apart be understood and acknowledged so that appropriate mitigating measures can be devised.

38. I reiterate my concern over developments in the fenced-off area of Varosha. The position of the United Nations on Varosha remains unchanged. I recall the statements by the President of the Security Council on the matter, as well as relevant Council resolutions, notably resolutions [550 \(1984\)](#) and [789 \(1992\)](#), and I underscore the importance of adhering fully to those resolutions.

39. I am concerned about the rising tensions in and around Cyprus and the broader eastern Mediterranean region. I stress again that natural resources in and around Cyprus should benefit both communities and constitute a strong incentive for the parties to find a mutually acceptable and durable solution to the Cyprus problem. I urge restraint by all parties and call for serious effort to be made to defuse tensions.

40. I encourage the parties to follow international best practice on the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes, as highlighted in consecutive Security Council resolutions since the adoption of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). I urge the parties to ensure the inclusion of at least 30 per cent women in any of their future delegations to talks, as well as in other bodies related to the talks, and to explore ways to ensure the effective participation of women, including at the grass-roots level, in the peace process, along with the inclusion of a gender perspective in a possible resumed negotiation process. With regard to the action plan requested by the Security Council, I commend the Technical Committee on Gender Equality for its work and urge the leaders to agree, as a matter of priority, on a joint action plan. I also urge the leaders to implement the recommendations set out in the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment to address existing barriers to the full economic participation of women, not only to benefit women today, but also to ensure that a future peace agreement will more equally benefit both men and women in Cyprus.

41. I echo the Security Council's support for greater civic engagement and trust-building and urge the leaders to encourage contact and cooperation more explicitly between the two communities. The leaders should aim for a more inclusive peace process, as per recent international best practice, and should involve underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, youth and persons with disabilities, in discussions pertaining to the Cyprus problem and in any resumed peace talks. I emphasize the important support role of the two United Nations missions on the ground in this regard and their mutually reinforcing activities.

42. I encourage the leaders to look to the future with pragmatism. As can be seen from the written updates annexed to the present report, the positions of the sides remain far apart. A continued lack of political progress has significant implications for all Cypriots. I call on all parties to refrain from any unhelpful actions and to actively seek solutions through dialogue. Without decisive action, continuing dynamics in and around Cyprus and electoral timelines could render future efforts to

reach a mutually agreeable settlement to the Cyprus issue unattainable. The parties' display of flexibility and firm political will is of paramount importance. I urge the parties to engage constructively on finding and building common ground, with a view towards a resumption of meaningful peace talks. A United Nations envoy to lead this engagement could provide critical support in this respect.

43. I would also stress the importance of all Cypriots engaging actively in shaping the future of the island and call on the guarantor powers to do their utmost to support efforts to ultimately bring the Cyprus issue to a settlement and bring peace and prosperity to all Cypriots. I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Spehar for her dedication and commitment to discharging the responsibilities entrusted to her as my Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus over the past five years and welcome the arrival in Cyprus of Colin Stewart, who has now taken up these duties. I also express my appreciation to Ms. Lute for conducting consultations on my behalf and to all the women and men serving in my mission of good offices in Cyprus for their continuing good work.

Annex I

Written update by the Greek Cypriot leader to the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary-General, pursuant to and in accordance with UNSCR 2587 (2021)

This submission is made in response to the encouragement in UN Security Council Resolution 2587 (2021), to “*the leaders of the two communities to provide written updates to the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary General on the actions they have taken in support of the relevant parts of this resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 6 and 7 and 9, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement*”.

The present update includes all developments relevant to the effort to resume the peace process in the framework of the Good Offices Mission of the UNSG, irrespective of their inter-state or inter-communal character. References to communities are without prejudice to the Republic of Cyprus as a Member State of the United Nations and references to UNFICYP are made without prejudice to the Republic of Cyprus as the host country of the Force.

I. Efforts to resume the peace process

Since the inconclusive closing of the Crans Montana Conference on Cyprus in July 2017, where we came closer than even before to a strategic agreement, our efforts have concentrated on the resumption of the peace process from the point that it was left in Crans Montana.

To this direction, an agreement in principle was reached between the leaders of the two communities in August 2019 to build the resumption of the negotiations on the Joint Declaration of 11th February 2014, the prior convergences achieved and the 6-point framework presented by the UN Secretary General in Crans Montana.

This agreement was confirmed at a trilateral meeting with the UNSG the following November in Berlin, paving the way for an informal 5+1 meeting of the parties, which would eventually take place in Geneva in April 2021, under difficult circumstances, given the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic but also the escalation of tension on and around Cyprus.

It is therefore extremely disappointing that the fundamental shift of the Turkish Cypriot position, with the encouragement of Ankara, from reunification of Cyprus based on a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation with political equality, to a recognition of 2 states, did not allow an agreement at Geneva to continue within the UN framework.

This was also accompanied by a rejection of the UN Secretary General’s proposal at Geneva for the appointment of a Special Envoy who would try to help the two sides find common ground for resumption. Instead, the Turkish Cypriot leader put forward preconditions for participating in any negotiation that are clearly outside the existing UN framework.

At the same time, Turkey’s illegal and provocative activities in the territorial sea, the continental shelf and the EEZ of Cyprus, the violations of the military status quo along the Turkish forces ceasefire line and Strovilia, as well as their illegal actions in the fenced area of Varosha, in defiance of the UN Security Council Resolutions and decisions, undermining any prospect for the resumption of negotiations, have created an extremely negative political climate.

This is a trend which gets extremely worrisome as Ankara does not refrain from launching at every opportunity threats for use of military force on and around Cyprus, exhibited *inter alia* through the upgrading of the illegal airport at Lefkonoiko, where now Turkish drones are stationed, in an obvious effort to create a military advantage in Cyprus and in the region, while of course increasing the risk of destabilization.

As the current situation entails grave threats for Cyprus and the region, we have at several occasions expressed our deep concern and asked for the support of the international community. While we have also expressed readiness to engage with constructive approach in any discussion that would help the resumption of the negotiations process, within the framework of the Good Offices of the UN Secretary General, as the best way to break the impasse.

Our participation at the informal trilateral meeting in New York last September was exactly in this spirit. First and foremost, by accepting unequivocally the appointment of a Special Envoy, who, through deliberations with both sides and within a specific period of 3-4 months, as the UN Secretary General had suggested in Geneva, would lead to the resumption of meaningful and substantive negotiations, within the UN framework.

Furthermore, by reminding that since the inconclusive closing of Crans Montana we have further elaborated on a number of aspects, mainly in order to respond to certain concerns expressed by the Turkish Cypriots and always within the existing framework.

In particular, we proposed the decentralization of the exercise of powers, through which the appropriate balance between the enhancement of the constituent states' essential role and the unhindered functioning of the state can be achieved. We expressed at the same time our willingness to consider the option of a parliamentary system with rotating and ceremonial head of state, acknowledging the importance of symbolism.

More recently, we extended an invitation to the Turkish Cypriots to rejoin the state institutions established by the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, thus fully implementing *mutatis mutandis* its relevant provisions. It goes without saying that such an invitation is not meant to be an alternative to the agreed basis of the settlement, as set out in UN Security Council Resolutions. On the contrary, it is exactly in this framework that the proposal is meant to integrate the Turkish Cypriot community into their place in the state pending the settlement, in particular if a strategic agreement is reached, and thus fully participate in the evolution of the Republic of Cyprus into a federal state.

We believe that such an arrangement could be the answer to the question of what happens in the case where negotiations produce a strategic agreement but we still have to go through a transitional period during which the detailed text of the comprehensive agreement would be agreed and put in referenda; and eventually put into effect.

This proposal could be assessed as part of the package of game-changer CBMs proposed by us last December (i.e. Timpou airport and Varosha administration to UN, Famagusta port under EU administration of Customs and Additional Protocol implemented in a non-discriminatory way by Turkey, proportional share of hydrocarbons exploitation's revenues in escrow account to the benefit of TC community, provided an agreement with Turkey on EEZ delimitation is in place).

Such bold decisions would render the move forward irreversible and in effect answer to the Turkish Cypriot demand for reassurances that they "will stand to gain from participating at the negotiations" and will not (as they prefer to frame it) "remain in limbo, in case of collapse".

For substantive negotiations to resume with realistic prospects of success though, it is imperative to create an environment conducive to constructive and in good faith negotiations. And while we are prepared to go the extra mile via Confidence Building Measures, we need on the one hand the Turkish Cypriot side and Ankara to reciprocate and on the other hand the UN to play their role with resolute and confidence.

In this regard, we see as an absolute necessity, bearing also in mind that a second informal 5+1 meeting was agreed in Geneva but has not yet materialized, the appointment of a Special Envoy, who would be ready to facilitate a serious discussion about the next step and the resumption of substantive negotiations. In our view, the above outlined ideas can contribute to meaningful and substantive negotiations, in an interdependent and parallel way (or perhaps a cross-negotiation of the six main issues included in the UN Secretary General's framework), which will address all concerns, while respecting the existing framework.

It was our belief that during the informal meeting in New York there was an understanding on the appointment by the UN Secretary General of a Special Envoy, yet this was later deconstructed during the drafting of the statement. It was unfortunate perhaps, that the statement was not issued immediately after the meeting and was left to be finalized later.

As negative this development as it might have been, it shall not deter us from maintaining the discussion and facilitated by the Good Offices finding a way to put the process back on track. Despite the enormous difficulties we are facing, we remain deeply committed to this end. Our vision of a peaceful Cyprus lies firmly within the established framework and a settlement of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

As we strive for a meaningful and fruitful process, we need the support of the UN and the UN Security Council in particular to impress upon all parties the need to refrain from any acts that could undermine the prospects of resumption of negotiations. In view in particular of the offensive moves by Turkey in Varosha and in the EEZ, as well as the further militarization of the island with a drone base in Lefkonoiko, a naval base in Trikomo and the further expansion of the Turkish military in the Karpas peninsula. Instead, what we need from all parties is support for the UN process with the aim to establish peace, stability and prosperity in Cyprus and in our region.

II. Effective mechanism for direct military contacts

Given the tension on and around Cyprus, including threats for use of military force emboldened by the upgrading of military capacity in the occupied areas, the necessity for the establishment of a mechanism for direct military contacts, between the opposing forces in Cyprus, facilitated by UNFICYP, becomes urgent.

Even more so, taking into account the continuous violations of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, in Varosha and the obstructions and interference on behalf of the Turkish occupation forces with UNFICYP duties, rendering the latter unable to perform its mandated tasks.

The calls by the UN Security Council to the parties involved to engage in the discussion testify to the urgent need to prevent further deterioration. In this direction, the government of the Republic of Cyprus presented a proposal already in December 2019, outlining a framework for a mechanism for direct military contacts between the opposing forces, namely the National Guard and the Turkish occupation forces, at the

level of their Commanders, facilitated by UNFICYP at respective level, in accordance with its mandate, as prescribed by the UN Security Council Resolution 186 (1964).

The government of the Republic of Cyprus stands ready to engage in further discussion, while in the meantime expects a firm and decisive stance on behalf of UNFICYP that would effectively deter further provocations by the Turkish occupation army.

III. Committee on Missing Persons

The work of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus remains a fundamental aspect of the peace process and therefore, the support of all parties is indeed considered a *conditio sine qua non*.

In this regard, we would like to stress once more the importance of access to information from relevant archives of countries and organizations that had a military or police presence in Cyprus in 1963, 1964 and 1974, thus rendering the Committee more effective.

In particular, the Turkish military archives, especially of the period around 1974. Turkey has the obligation to exercise due diligence and provide information from its archives in good faith, to help determine the fate of missing persons in Cyprus.

Access to military archives would *inter alia* provide information regarding primary locations of burial of missing persons, as well as secondary locations given that a great number of remains were relocated, rendering the efforts of the Committee extremely difficult.

As pointed out numerous times in the past, it is indeed critical to grant access to information on these archives and obtain pertinent information to the question of the fate of missing persons, which constitutes one of the grave humanitarian challenges of the conflict.

IV. Technical Committees

Since their establishment in 2008, the Technical Committees continue working under the UN auspices, in the framework of the efforts for a settlement of the Cyprus problem. Based on the set of principles agreed by the leaders on 8th of July 2006, the Technical Committees' work on issues that affect the day-to-day life of the people was envisaged as complementary to the concurrent negotiations on substantive issues, in pursuit of a comprehensive settlement.

Thus, in the absence of substantive negotiations, the Technical Committees continue their work, without of course substituting or altering the framework of the political process. The respect of the agreed *modus operandi* is of critical importance now, taking into account the Turkish Cypriot effort to impose their 2-states approach, which lies totally outside the agreed UN framework.

Restoring COVID-19 *status quo ante* at the crossing points last summer, which facilitated enhancement of inter-communal contacts, was also expected to help the Technical Committees' work. Indeed, the Technical Committee on Health, which spearheaded efforts to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, concluded the first phase of the project on the *identification and distribution of mosquito vectors* to address the risk for disease transmission, funded by the Support Facility under EU Regulation 389/2006 and started the implementation of its second phase.

Other major projects are waiting to also be finalized and/or approved in the framework of the Support Facility to the Technical Committees. In particular, the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment recycling proposal by the Technical Committee on Entrepreneurship and Commercial Affairs presented in June, as well as the website of the Technical Committee on Environment and the Lessons Plans by the Technical Committee on Education, the finalization of which has been delayed by a discussion on aspects mostly related to the Facility's framework rather than the proposals themselves.

Beyond the framework of the Facility, it is a positive sign that all Technical Committees had either virtual, hybrid or physical meetings during the reporting period, despite the adverse circumstances due to the pandemic. There were also few events organized by the Technical Committees. Notably, The Technical Committee on Environment organized well-attended field-trips of experts on sites of environmental interest, focusing on the thematic area of biodiversity and nature protection. Whereas the Technical Committee on Crisis Management organized a seminar on wildfires in early summer and a seminar on floods in autumn for experts from both communities to exchange information and valuable experience.

The Technical Committee on Education also held the launch event of the bicomunal "Imagine" project in early November, while in collaboration and synergy with the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, works on the *Prevalence, Correlates and prevention of conventional bullying in schools and cyberbullying* project, consisted of research to collect systematic data on stereotypes, prejudice and other factors of bullying.

Under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, the Joint Contacts Room, has systematically been facilitating exchange of information regarding crimes. As an established and trusted channel for exchange of sensitive information, JCR is an extremely useful tool in our efforts to address certain challenges arising from the *status quo* that are related to crime, as well as relevant aspects of more complicated issues, like the multifaceted phenomenon of irregular migration. On the latter, a preliminary discussion has already taken place with the synergy of a number of relevant Technical Committees (i.e. Crime and Criminal Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, Gender Equality) and the contribution of experts, in order to identify sectoral challenges of criminal as well as of humanitarian nature.

The Technical Committee on Gender Equality also worked on an Action Plan including Recommendations to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace talks and to provide direct support and encouragement to civil society organizations to enhance inter communal contact and trust-building, as requested by the UN Security Council in its Resolution [2587 \(2021\)](#). Although the Action Plan was not finalized due to the difficulty to converge on agreed language (i.e. the language of the Resolution) regarding the settlement process *per se*, the draft Recommendations have been incorporated in separate submissions of the leaders on the 15th December 2021, in response to the respective request of the UN Security Council.

The Technical Committee on Telecommunications confirmed an understanding initially reached in 2019 with mutual reassurances that would allow the clearance of the 700MHz frequency band from analogue transmissions and the unhindered rollout of 5G services.

Last but not least, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage has maintained its impressive volume of work, which was acknowledged and celebrated through the 2021 European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards. In particular, the Technical Committee was 2021 Grand Prix Winner and a Laureate in the Category "Dedicated

Service to Heritage”, a distinction among 24 winning achievements in the field from 18 European countries that will hopefully pave the way for further achievements.

We will of course keep supporting and encouraging the Technical Committees to use all tools available, especially the Support Facility funded by the EU in the framework of the Regulation 389/2006, in order to continue and enhance their work, as an invaluable contribution in creating a more positive political environment, in the framework of their mandates and their complementary role to the substantial negotiations in the context of the settlement process.

Annex II

Actions taken by the Turkish Cypriot Side in support of the relevant parts of Security Council Resolution [2587 \(2021\)](#) adopted on 29 July 2021

I. Actions Taken in Support of Reaching a Sustainable and Comprehensive Settlement

Our new vision: realistic basis for the island of Cyprus

I am strongly committed to the new Turkish Cypriot vision for a sustainable settlement in Cyprus, which I began to put forward when I was serving as the Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Since my election as the fifth President of the TRNC, I have been sharing my new vision, which is a solution based on the inherent sovereign equality and the equal international status of the two existing States on the island. The establishment of a cooperative relationship between the two on this basis is a requirement of the indisputable principle of “equality” and would provide mutual benefits for the two Peoples on the island while contributing to the much-needed security, stability and cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Drawing from the lessons learnt from half a century of failed and exhausted UN-led negotiations, it is imperative that an equilibrium is established between the Turkish Cypriot Side and the Greek Cypriot Side, not only at the negotiating table, but, most importantly, outside.

The necessity of leveling the playing field for a successful outcome has become more apparent from the statement of Mr Nicos Anastasiades, the Greek Cypriot leader, delivered in September at the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. In delivering his rather hostile and provocative statement at a platform where Turkish Cypriots could not voice their views, the Greek Cypriot leader openly admitted his vision of Greek Cypriot superiority over the Turkish Cypriot People by presenting the 100% Greek Cypriot state as the master of the island, whilst conveniently putting a glossy cover over the usurpation of the 1960 bi-communal partnership Republic of Cyprus and the repeated refusal of the Greek Cypriot side to share power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot side, their sovereign equal. It is this obsession of having superiority that has obstructed an equality-based settlement on the island for decades, which remains to be the first issue that needs to be addressed.

The 1960 partnership Republic of Cyprus is not the “Republic” that Mr Anastasiades purports to represent. That State, which was destroyed by the Greek Cypriot side, lasted for 3 years only. What exists today on the international arena instead is a hijacked state, composed of Greek Cypriots only, devoid of its constitutional set-up, where almost half of the Articles of its Constitution have been suspended under the guise of the “doctrine of necessity”. It is undisputed that what is presented as the “Republic of Cyprus” is a Greek Cypriot state with jurisdiction, authority and sovereignty that ends at the crossing points to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

While one side maintains its intransigent stance based on a claim that it is the sole legitimate authority that represents the entire island of Cyprus, unjust isolation has been imposed on the Turkish Cypriot Side that continues to be treated as a subject ‘community’ of the “one hundred per cent” Greek Cypriot state. The Turkish Cypriots are not a subject ‘community’, but a People that has been forced into establishing its

own state because of the usurpation of the partnership state it established with the Greek Cypriot partner in 1960 and because of the reluctance of the Greek Cypriots to share power and prosperity with Turkish Cypriots. As such the Turkish Cypriot State is at least as sovereign as that of the Greek Cypriots’.

As their President, I represent the State that the Turkish Cypriot People have established after undergoing many years of atrocities, threat of extermination through genocide, exclusion and being left without a status for years. TRNC, with its own fully-functioning, democratically-elected Government, Parliament and Judiciary, possesses all attributes of a modern State. Despite the unjust isolation it has been under, even in the fields of sports and culture, TRNC, with her young and educated population, continues to prosper.

Factual and legal realities clearly show that it is the inherent equality of the Turkish Cypriot Side and the Greek Cypriot Side that entitles each to enjoy the same rights and status, both internally and externally. Since the Greek Cypriot polity is claiming full sovereignty, equality and the needed political equilibrium on the island necessitates that any relationship between the two Sides should be based on their sovereign equality and equal international status.

My People deserve to live in peace and harmony as would any other distinct People. On the island, the Turkish Cypriot People want to establish good neighbourly relations and to cooperate with their Greek Cypriot counterparts. While doing so, my People want to preserve and protect their existence, distinct identity, equality and sovereignty.

In full respect to the will of my People, my vision is to work towards a cooperative relationship with the Greek Cypriot side based on inherent sovereign equality and equal international status. At a time when bi-zonal, bi-communal federation as a basis for a solution has been exhausted, I will continue my engagement with the UN to explore whether or not common ground exists before formal negotiations can start. At the same time, I remain committed to establishing institutional cooperation with our Greek Cypriot counterparts.

This commitment does not entail engaging in negotiations for the sake of negotiations. Open-ended negotiations that lasted for decades on the same, repeatedly failed basis without an outcome resulted in the continuation of the suffering of the Turkish Cypriot People under isolation, while further bolstering the Greek Cypriot Side’s intransigent stance.

I met with the UN Secretary-General, Mr António Guterres, on 25 June 2021 at the UN Office in Brussels. The fact that the meeting was held on the same day as his meeting with the Greek Cypriot Leader was an important sign that the UNSG will continue to respect equality, and maintain a fair and balanced approach in the way he has done during the 5+UN informal meeting in Geneva. During the meeting, I told the UNSG that I remain committed to continuing our discussions aimed at exploring whether common ground exists between the two Sides that would enable the start of new formal negotiations for a fair and sustainable settlement in Cyprus. To that end, I expressed my readiness to rise to the challenge to square the circle, and to spend all the effort necessary to solve the Cyprus issue that has been occupying the UN agenda since 1963.

At that meeting, I reiterated the six-point proposal I tabled in Geneva outlining the new vision, fully supported by Turkey that will break the deadlock in the decades-long failed negotiations. Furthermore, I expressed my determination to engage in negotiations on a new basis with a view to establishing a cooperative relationship between the two existing States, upon the formal acknowledgement of our inherent

equal rights with the Greek Cypriot side, securing the sovereign equality and equal international status of the two Sides.

I also shared with the UNSG my conviction that in the Cyprus context, past experiences have shown that negotiations do not yield results unless equilibrium is established between the two Sides, and when equality is only recognized at the negotiating table. Also, I confirmed that negotiation on the old failed asymmetric basis in Cyprus has long been exhausted and it is now clear that this model cannot yield a sustainable result.

Following the acknowledgment and securing of our sovereign equality and equal international status, I shared my commitment with the UNSG that I am ready to engage in formal negotiations that will focus on substance, including the future relationship between the two independent States, property, security and border adjustment, as well as relations with the EU.

Moreover, I noted that the Greek Cypriot stance against the acknowledgment of the equal inherent rights of the Turkish Cypriot Side serves to block the initiation of formal negotiations and called upon the UNSG for his intervention in this issue. I also underlined the importance of the work of the Technical Committees as a bottom-up track 2 process and shared my commitment to initiate new concrete proposals to contribute to the daily lives of people from both Sides. I reiterated to the UNSG the four principles my Special Representative, together with the Greek Cypriot Negotiator, agreed before proposing a measure as confidence-building measures as part of the bottom-up process to be

- (a) mutually agreed;
- (b) mutually beneficial;
- (c) respecting the equality of the two Sides; and
- (d) not involving or implying the extension of one side's authority over the other.

While I expressed satisfaction about some positive results (for example, in making all the crossing points operational as they were in the pre-COVID-19 period), I said I was ready to continue to take up additional tangible, practical confidence-building measures in line with the bottom up approach the UNSG has proposed in Geneva.

At the same time, I expressed concern about the proposals advanced by the Greek Cypriot Leader in Geneva, as they violated the agreed principles for CBMs, were top down, and required addressing issues related to substance that can only be tackled as part of formal negotiations. Therefore, any proposal to be considered as a confidence building measure should be prepared in full respect to the four principles that the Sides agreed under the auspices of the UN.

Concerning UNFICYP, I reiterated to the UNSG the indispensable principle of peacekeeping operations which requires the consent and approval of the conflicting parties. In the absence of the consent of both Sides in Cyprus, UNFICYP "risks becoming a party to the conflict", as stated in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines. Also, respect to the equality of the two Sides necessitates that UNFICYP works with the Turkish Cypriot Side and formalizes the modalities of its operations in the TRNC. This could be done in the form of a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) or through another mutually acceptable format.

Another major development in the reporting period has been the opening of the pilot area in the closed part of Maraş (Varosha). On 20 July 2021, the 47-year old military status of a section of the closed part of Maraş was modified. As a result of

this change, access to the properties by the former inhabitants in what has been turned into a civilian area by the decision of the TRNC Council of Ministers, is made possible, through the Immovable Property Commission, that is recognized as an effective domestic remedy by the European Court of Human Rights. The Immovable Property Commission can now grant all three remedies in this area, namely restitution and/or compensation and/or exchange.

Our opening of Maraş, which remained a symbol of the status quo, has become a sign of change in Cyprus. With this move, the closed part of Maraş, located in the Famagusta region, is gradually being incorporated into civilian life, in full respect to the rights of its former inhabitants.

During this period, I had another bilateral meeting with the UNSG in the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York on 25 September 2021. At this meeting, I shared the underlying reasons of the current impasse at the political level. I reminded the UNSG that the Greek Cypriot Side rejected all UN-initiated settlement plans, while refusing to recognize the sovereign equality and equal international status of the Turkish Cypriot Side on a par with their own sovereignty claims and international status. It is clear that the Greek Cypriot leadership's only aim is to maintain its usurped status claiming to be the sole owner of the island by managing the status quo and using the failed negotiating process to this end.

I called upon the UN and the international community to establish the needed equilibrium on the island by empowering the Turkish Cypriot Side in order to prepare the ground for a sustainable political settlement.

As a first step, I explained to the UNSG that this necessitates the lifting of the inhuman and unjustified economic, social and sporting restrictions imposed on the Turkish Cypriot Side.

Secondly, I told UNSG that since the top-down political settlement process is at an impasse, the ongoing bottom-up process aimed at bettering the daily lives of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots needed to be enhanced and made more effective. This bottom-up process is currently continuing through the Technical Committees. This process is reinforced by the active engagement of the Turkish Cypriot Special Representative and the Greek Cypriot Negotiator, through a mechanism created by the former SRSG Elizabeth Spehar, which enables the sides to discuss and agree a number of non-political confidence building measures that help build confidence and contribute to the daily lives of people from both Sides.

There are three key requirements that need to be in place to enhance the work of the Technical Committees and make them more effective, that is

- the four principles agreed by the Special Representative and the Negotiator on confidence building measures have to be respected,
- revision of the composition of the 12 Technical Committees to include people with authority from both Sides so that they can secure prompt and substantive decisions from their authorities on issues addressed by the Technical Committees, and
- the support of the political leaderships to the work of the Technical Committees has to be secured.

As I explained to the UNSG in New York, while the political settlement process, the work of the Technical Committees and any CBMs are all interlinked, the difficulties at the political level should not obstruct dialogue and meaningful cooperation channels which aim at addressing issues faced by people from the two Sides in their interaction. Moreover, the maintenance of this channel and its enhancement could contribute to the preparation of the ground for a new formal

negotiation process to start, together with the creation of a culture of cooperation between the two sides. I concluded my meeting with the UNSG by asking for his contribution to support this channel if the bottom up process is to serve the purposes of confidence building and the preparation of the ground for a sovereign equality-based comprehensive settlement.

Despite the negative atmosphere created by the extremely disappointing speech of my counterpart at the UN General Assembly, I participated in good faith in the tripartite lunch the UNSG hosted in New York on 27 September 2021. I took this opportunity to reiterate my vision and to encourage the establishment of institutional cooperation between the two sides aiming at the creation of confidence-building and the further development of the work of the Technical Committees for the preparation of the ground.

During the lunch, in order to carry out the efforts to explore whether or not common ground exists, there was an agreement with the UNSG's suggestion to appoint a Personal Envoy, who would continue this exercise between the two sides and the representatives of the three Guarantor Powers. I emphasized at this meeting the pressing need to foster "out of the box" thinking instead of tried and failed ideas and processes. The agreement on the appointment of a Personal Envoy was also reflected in the draft press statement the UNSG shared with the parties after the informal tripartite lunch. Nevertheless, the Greek Cypriot Leader subsequently retracted from this agreement, leading to delays in the appointment of a Personal Envoy to this day.

II. Actions Taken in Support of Confidence Building as well as Promoting Contacts and Reconciliation

Confidence Building issues and measures

I consider that the work of the Technical Committees provides a powerful tool for cooperation by creating an atmosphere of reconciliation, co-existence and confidence between the two Sides on the island. We, as the Turkish Cypriot Side, firmly believe that the enhancement of a genuine working relationship between the two Sides contributes to the improvement of the daily lives of the Turkish Cypriot People and the Greek Cypriot People while supporting the building up of confidence and the development of a culture of cooperation.

As you are well aware, a new mechanism has been established by the then UN Special Representative Elizabeth Spehar last February, and a forum was created to tackle the challenges, requests and proposals introduced by the two Sides in order to ease the lives of both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. Within the framework of this forum, the Turkish Cypriot Special Representative M. Ergün Olgun, and the Greek Cypriot Negotiator Andreas Mavroyiannis hold regular weekly meetings with the facilitation of the UN Special Representative. The Turkish Cypriot Coordinator and the Greek Cypriot Coordinator of the Technical Committees also hold their separate weekly meetings to prepare the ground for the meetings of the Special Representative and the Negotiator under UN auspices. This mechanism works on the basis of a win-win approach on issues of mutual interest to both parties. The weekly meetings also contribute to the work of the 12 Technical Committees as the necessary political decisions are taken in that format, paving the way for the Committees to discuss the technical aspects and modalities in relation to implementation.

1. Technical Committees

The Technical Committee on Health has continued to address the ever-changing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This work included cooperation in the fight against COVID-19, promptly exchanging epidemiological information, addressing urgent requests concerning medical emergencies, facilitating the delivery of vaccines and the synchronization of the two sides' respective COVID-19 measures concerning crossings.

At the same time, the Technical Committee on Health managed to finalize the first phase of the project on the identification and distribution of mosquito vectors to address the risk for disease transmission, through public awareness and exchange of views and information on necessary measures to protect public health. The Technical Committee on Health also issued a flyer and a video recording of the first phase of the project. They are currently implementing the second phase of this important project.

The Turkish Cypriot Side proposed synchronization of vaccination certificates, which includes COVID-19 vaccination information and test details, that are issued by the Turkish Cypriot Side, Ada Pass, and a similar pass issued by the Greek Cypriot Side, Safe Pass, with a view to expediting the procedures applicable at the crossing points.

The most challenging issue, which also adversely affects the freedom of movement of the Turkish Cypriot People, is not being able to register their already administered and approved vaccinations to obtain the required vaccination certificates for travel purposes. This issue remains on the agenda of the Technical Committee on Health as the two Sides have not yet found a practical solution to this very important humanitarian issue.

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage has continued to hold its regular weekly meetings and to implement its projects successfully to ensure the protection of cultural heritage monuments on both Sides of the island for the future generations to come. During this period, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage completed its conservation work at the Salamis Archaeological site and at the Zuhuri Mosque, and started conservation work at the Ottoman-era Tuzla Hamam and the Orunda Mosque. Additionally, preparations for the projects of 10 mosques in South Cyprus and 10 churches and other various monuments in the North are either completed or ongoing.

In addition to being awarded the European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award in the category of dedicated service to heritage, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage also received the Grand Prix Laureate in the category for "Dedicated Service to Heritage by Organizations and Individuals".

The Technical Committee on Environment is finalizing the website designed to bring experts from both Sides to exchange views and experiences on environmental issues. In this reporting period, the Technical Committee on Environment organized two field visits starting from the South and then moved to the North. Also, the Committee discussed ways of cooperation to tackle the threats arising from climate change and to form a joint action plan to address this common problem. The Technical Committee has been tasked by the Special Representative and the Negotiator to work on the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals and to identify those goals that can be pursued, and, if necessary, adapted to the island of Cyprus.

The Technical Committee on Education has re-launched the "Imagine" project and resumed training activities for this year which had been stalled due to the pandemic. The Technical Committee continued its work on the Pilot Project on

Educational Materials which will be finalized following official approvals from the relevant Departments.

The Technical Committee on Education, in collaboration with the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, prepared a joint project, entitled “Prevalence, Correlates, and Prevention of Conventional Bullying in Schools and Cyberbullying”, which is pending final approval from the two Sides. Furthermore, preparations for the implementation of this project, which aims at collecting systematic data on stereotypes, prejudice and other factors of bullying are continuing. Work on identifying risks and protective factors and using this information in training for teachers is also continuing.

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters has continued to actively carry out its daily duties in the Joint Communications Room (JCR) located in the Buffer Zone. The official personnel from the respective Police Departments assigned to the JCR have continued to exchange information on various issues related to crime and effectively processed applications coming from each Side. In this reporting period, as the Turkish Cypriot Side, we handed over 2 suspected criminals to the Greek Cypriot Side through JCR. The Committee also continued its collaboration with other Technical Committees on projects under its mandate. During this period, due to the rising number of criminality in the village of Pile/Pyla, UN proposed a JCR-like mechanism to be formed at this village. As the Turkish Cypriot Side, upon consultation with our security departments, we proposed to form a new JCR or a branch of JCR located in Lefkoşa/Nicosia, with the same modalities and mandate. We also proposed this new JCR to be placed at the UN post in the village. We are expecting the positive response of the Greek Cypriot Side to proceed with this new arrangement as soon as possible.

The Technical Committee on Economy and Commercial Matters actively continues to engage with their Greek Cypriot counterparts to tackle the negative impact of the pandemic on the economies of the two Sides. The Committee is also tasked to work on further economic cooperation for the post-pandemic period.

It is a known fact that trade across the Green Line is yet to reach the desired level. One of the main impediments is the absence of financial transactions between the banking systems of the two Sides, The Committee is looking into ways of overcoming this problem.

As the Turkish Cypriot Side we also proposed to solve long-standing issues, such as the crossing of Turkish Cypriot registered commercial vehicles and processed food to the South. In order to enhance Green Line trade, we also proposed to set up a joint laboratory within the buffer zone to be jointly managed by the two Chambers of Commerce.

The Technical Committee on Economy and Commercial Matters is also working on a feasibility project for the recycling of electronic waste in collaboration with the Technical Committee on Environment.

After a long time, **the Technical Committee on Crossings** has had its first meeting during this reporting period. It is a known fact that there is always a congestion at Metehan/Ayios Demetios crossing point. The Turkish Cypriot Co-Chair proposed to discuss how to handle this issue, but her Greek Cypriot counterpart put forward a series of preconditions even to discuss this practical matter, which affects the daily lives of both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Affairs agreed to organize a campaign to raise awareness about the difficulties faced by the elderly. The Committee also has been discussing other humanitarian issues that affect the lives of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

The Technical Committee on Crisis Management has organized a seminar on forest fires in June. Following the presentations of the two Sides, 5 issues were identified as future fields of cooperation. The said 5 issues are as follows:

- Compilation of an inventory which will include natural disaster risks,
- Regular meetings of experts from the Department of the Forestry of the two Sides,
- Formation of fire breaks,
- Establishing direct contact with the UN with regards to the fires in the buffer zone, and
- Providing information and training for the public.

Also, in October and November, the Committee organized a seminar on floods and worked on how to cooperate and assist each other in the case of floods affecting either Side.

The Technical Committee on Broadcasting concluded an agreement that will make the way for the introduction and usage of 5G across the island. According to the agreement reached between the Turkish Cypriot Side and the Greek Cypriot Side, TV broadcasting systems will be removed from the 700 MHz frequency band; transitioning from analogue to digital broadcasting, with the support of the European Union; allowing the allocation of the 700 MHz frequency band to 5G mobile services. This important agreement was concluded by the Turkish Cypriot Special Representative, Mr. M. Ergün Olgun and the Greek Cypriot Negotiator, Mr. Andreas D. Mavroyiannis, with the facilitation of the Special Representative and Deputy Special Adviser of the United Nations Secretary-General on Cyprus, Ms. Elizabeth Spehar.

Efforts are being made to make **the Technical Committee on Culture** work more actively in the coming period. In line with the improved conditions within the scope of combating the pandemic, the evaluation of the proposals made by the two Parties regarding cultural activities in the new period has begun. We have already appointed a new Chair and strengthened the Committee with two new members. These changes have already given new momentum to the work of the Committee.

As the Turkish Cypriot Side, we attach great importance to gender issues and therefore to the work of **the Technical Committee on Gender Equality**. In the coming period, we would like to bring gender sensitive issues to the agenda of the Committee and to develop projects on raising awareness on this topic, including the use of gender sensitive language. The Technical Committee worked intensively on the preparation of an Action Plan on the effective participation of women to the peace process, in line with the call of the Security Council. After a very intensive period with the facilitation of UN, the Sides reached an agreement on substance, but due to the insistence on the usage of terminology which prejudices the outcome of the common ground exercise the joint action plan is yet to be completed.

Despite this the Turkish Cypriot Side has submitted an action plan to the UN Good Offices Mission of the UNSG which reflects the agreements reached in the Technical Committee on Gender Equality on substance in a way that does not prejudice the position of either Side in the political process.

We support the **Sustainable Development Goals** and we deem it very relevant to the work of the Technical Committees in general. We strongly support the introduction of these Goals to these works and already tasked the Technical Committee on Environment to work on those 17 topics. We hope that in the upcoming

period, our Greek Cypriot counterparts will respond positively and we can start introducing these Goals to our process.

On **irregular migration**, we give great importance to this global challenge and propose to form an effective mechanism that includes the relevant Technical Committees, with the participation of the competent authorities, to effectively cooperate on this matter that adversely affects the island. The Greek Cypriot Side regrettably wanted to limit deliberations of this issue within the limits of the Technical Committees. Dealing with this complicated and serious issue requires people with authority who have the capacity to reach directly to the decision-makers, who can share sensitive information and intervene as necessary. We hope that in the upcoming period, our Greek Cypriot counterparts will choose close cooperation instead of political blame game to address this humanitarian issue that affects both Sides.

2. The Committee on Missing Persons

In the reporting period, TRNC authorities continued to support the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) which has been instrumental in addressing this sensitive humanitarian issue.

Information at the disposal of the Turkish side on possible burial sites has already been shared with the CMP in 1998. Since then the TRNC has been forwarding any new information that comes to light. As far as further search for documentary information about possible burial sites is concerned, TRNC authorities have given access to CMP to conduct investigations in a number of state archives. Furthermore, the Archive Committee, established in 2016, has been responding to the specific requests of the CMP by resorting to relevant archives, with a view to locating additional burial sites. During the reporting period, the Turkish Cypriot Member's Office of the CMP had access to aerial photos dating from 1974, analyzing 78 different coordinates in 55 different regions.

After CMP identifies possible burial sites, it proceeds with exhumations according to a work plan. In order to assist CMP, TRNC authorities continued to make the necessary arrangements so that CMP can have access to any suspected burial site throughout the TRNC. In this context, CMP has been continuing its work in 30 additional military areas where access has been granted in June 2019, where excavations will be conducted according to the excavation planning of the CMP.

Work, which has been interrupted due to COVID-19 measures, has resumed and the Committee continued its work in all areas, including the military areas, subject to the applicable COVID-19-related measures. In 2021, CMP excavated 70 areas in the TRNC, 6 of which are in military areas. 6 of the excavations in the TRNC are continuing, and 1 of these excavations is in a military area.

TRNC continues to support CMP financially. Annual financial contributions to the budget of the Office of the Turkish Cypriot Member of the CMP in the amount of approximately EUR 1,000,000 per year are supplemented by additional contributions. Additional contributions to date have reached EUR 433,000. EU's total contributions in the amount of EUR 30,700,000 are from the funds the European Union, earmarked for the economic development of Turkish Cypriots. CMP's work can be accelerated with additional funding.

CMP also identified 16 additional missing persons during the reporting period, 7 of whom were Turkish Cypriot missing persons and 9 were Greek Cypriot missing persons, as well as 5 Greek Cypriot deceased and 1 Turkish Cypriot deceased who were not on the CMP's official missing persons list. Thus, a total of 22 individuals have been identified during the reporting period.

3. Hellim/Halloumi

Hellim/Halloumi is a common traditional cheese product that belongs to both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. On 12 April 2021, the European Commission proceeded to adopt two legislative instruments, one registering Hellim/Halloumi as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and the other purporting to enable its trade across the Green Line. In enacting the instruments, the European Commission went against its stated policies of ending the isolation on Turkish Cypriots through economic development, the law, the facts on the ground and the equality of the two sides, and disregarded the legitimate concerns expressed by the Turkish Cypriot Side and the relevant stakeholders.

With the two legislative instruments concerning Hellim/Halloumi, the EU has surrendered to the Greek Cypriot policy of extending its authority and jurisdiction over the Turkish Cypriot Side, which is not only totally unacceptable and illegitimate, but also against the principle that neither side may claim authority or jurisdiction over the other side. Each side knows where their authority and jurisdiction, indeed their sovereignty, starts and ends – that is, at the crossing points. The crossing points through which movement of persons and goods are regulated are clear indicators of this reality.

In the workings of the European Commission, which includes trade of goods to the EU through the Green Line, the European Commission has been the counterpart of the TRNC authorities and producers. With the recent changes concerning Hellim/Halloumi, however, the European Commission, as a potential facilitator, was removed from the equation and Turkish Cypriots were put in a position whereby they are subordinated to the Greek Cypriot administration.

The practical consequence of this arrangement has been yet another example of discrimination against the Turkish Cypriot People. Greek Cypriot producers, producing 85% of Hellim/Halloumi in the South, have already started benefiting from the PDO Registration, upon the commencement of the application of the PDO Regulation on 1 October 2021, with the relevant control body granting them the necessary PDO listing on time. By contrast, the same control body refrained from even contacting its counterpart Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce to start the same process in the TRNC and to sign an agreement to work out the necessary arrangements in detail. Furthermore, no steps have been taken to ensure the crossing of Hellim/Halloumi for trade to the EU across the Green Line. Even though the relevant instrument entered into force on 12 April 2021, there has not been an appointment of the delegated body for health and safety, which needs to start gathering the scientific evidence for a favorable Commission Decision concerning animal health status in the TRNC, and then monitor residues and inspect milk processing establishments.

On 26 October 2021, I wrote to Mrs Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, to express in no uncertain terms that I will not accept any discrimination and injustice towards my People. I underlined that in a period where efforts have concentrated on exploring whether common ground exists and building confidence between the two Sides, the actions and decisions taken by the EU have caused significant damage to the process.

Reminding the President of the EU's undertaking to ensure there is a 'workable arrangement' on the Island for Hellim/Halloumi for Turkish Cypriot producers and Greek Cypriot producers alike, I asked for her intervention to facilitate the signing of an agreement between the control body and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, and reminded her of our position on the appointment of a health and safety body, in accordance with the established method used under the Green Line

Regulation by the European Commission, or alternatively jointly by the two Sides. In my letter, I emphasized that taking action would serve to repair the unjust and discriminatory situation that was created by the decisions concerning Hellim/Halloumi and to contribute to the building of confidence on the island.

4. Isolation and Restrictions

There has not been any change in the Greek Cypriot policy of imposing isolation and restrictions on the Turkish Cypriot People, which has been continuing since 1963. This obstructionist policy aims to adversely affect Turkish Cypriots in several areas ranging from direct trade to direct flights, from cultural to sporting events, as well as representation at the international forums.

The economic discrepancy between the two Sides remained wide in the reporting period. The Turkish Cypriot Side continued to seek technical and financial assistance from numerous organizations in order to tackle the negative effects of COVID-19, but such moves did not produce any results despite the assistance the Greek Cypriot Side received for this purpose. This has exacerbated the socio-economic disparity between the two Sides. In the reporting period, there has not been any development to ensure better implementation of the Green Line Regulation. As the Turkish Cypriot Side, we have already put forward concrete, mutually beneficial and practical proposals in order to help both Sides' economies during these difficult times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Hydrocarbons

Hydrocarbon resources around the island of Cyprus belong to the Turkish Cypriot People and the Greek Cypriot People. This fact is accepted by both Sides on the Island, and all relevant and involved parties. Despite our constructive proposals since 2011 for cooperation regarding exploration, exploitation and monetizing on those resources, the Greek Cypriot Side continued its aggressive stance and preferred to pursue their provocative activities.

The announcement of the Greek Cypriot Side to resume their unilateral and illegal activities, in total disregard to the rights of the Turkish Cypriot People and the maritime claims of the Republic of Turkey, is yet another blow to the security, stability and cooperation, not only in Cyprus but also in the entire region. In response, TRNC and Turkey will continue to protect their rights and are determined to proceed with our own hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities leaving the door open to cooperation as co-owners.

As one of the co-owners of hydrocarbon resources off the island of Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot Side continues to urge the Greek Cypriot Side to refrain from engaging in unilateral acts that destabilize our region. The Turkish Cypriot proposal for the establishment of a joint *ad hoc* committee providing for the joint management, exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons resources, respectively in 2011, 2012, and 2019, continues to be the way forward. In the proposal of the Turkish Cypriot Side dated 13 July 2019, which is still on the table, the purpose of the joint committee to be established, with the facilitation of the UN, is foreseen to seek common consent on the planning, decision making and implementation of current and future hydrocarbon activities.

Further to the proposal of the Turkish President to convene a regional conference on hydrocarbons, I, as the President, am ready to participate in such a conference on an equal status with the Greek Cypriot Side.

6. Maraş/Varosha

One of the most significant developments regarding Maraş/Varosha in the reporting period has been the decision of the TRNC Council of Ministers announced on 20 July 2021 to change the status of a designated portion of the closed part of Maraş/Varosha into a civilian area. This move is directed towards enabling the former inhabitants to be granted by the ECtHR-sanctioned Immovable Property Commission (IPC) all three remedies regarding property claims. Despite all the efforts of the Greek Cypriot leadership to prevent their people from applying to the IPC, to date, there are 42 applications concerning the designated civilian area. According to the statement of Növber Ferit Veçhi, the President of the IPC, on 30 November 2021, the number of applications to the IPC concerning the Maraş/Varosha region has increased from 280 in February 2020, to 338 on 12 November 2021, reaching 410 by 30 November 2021. This development shows that the Maraş/Varosha initiative of the Turkish Cypriot side has been well received by the former inhabitants of the area.

The policy of the Turkish Cypriot Side regarding Maraş/Varosha constitutes also a confidence building measure geared towards the rights of the inhabitants of the area in line with the calls of the relevant international actors and bodies.
