



# Security Council

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## Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus

### I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution [2723 \(2024\)](#), requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on his good offices by 3 January 2025, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations to lead to a settlement. In its resolution, the Council encouraged the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to provide written updates to the Secretary-General's mission of good offices on the action that they had taken in support of the relevant parts of the resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 7 to 10, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement, and requested the Secretary-General to include the contents of those updates in the report. The updates submitted by the two leaders are contained in annexes I and II to the present report.

2. The report covers developments from 13 June 2024 to 11 December 2024. It provides an update on the activities carried out by the Secretary-General's mission of good offices under the leadership of the Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus, Colin Stewart. The report also covers the Secretary-General's engagement with the parties.

### II. Significant developments

3. Building on the work of his Personal Envoy on Cyprus, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, who concluded her assignment in July, the Secretary-General engaged with the two leaders and the guarantor Powers, Greece, Türkiye and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Following those discussions, he invited the Greek Cypriot leader, Nikos Christodoulides, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar, to an informal dinner in New York on 15 October.

4. The leaders agreed to have an informal meeting in a broader format in the near future, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to discuss the way forward. They also agreed to meet in Cyprus to explore the possibility of opening new crossing points. During the period, the two sides have begun discussing this specific issue, under the auspices of the United Nations.

5. The informal meeting on 15 October was welcomed on both sides of the island and raised hope among Cypriots that progress could be made between the two Cypriot leaders towards a return to dialogue on the Cyprus issue. The prospect of the opening of new crossing points has also been welcomed in both communities. Furthermore,



the upcoming informal meeting in a broader format involving the guarantor Powers has brought renewed focus on the peace process and has sparked public debate and speculation regarding the substantive aspects of the Cyprus issue.

### **III. Background and context**

6. The guarantor Powers of Greece and Türkiye continued to improve relations at various levels, including through regular meetings at the leadership level. The two capitals have repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to strengthen their relationship. This rapprochement is encouraging, given that their constructive support of the peace process is critical in the context of the Cyprus issue.

7. The meetings of representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia continued to be held regularly during the reporting period, with the participation of 15 parties from across the island. In their joint communiqués, the political parties stressed the need to improve the political atmosphere, de-escalate tensions and return to the negotiating table. The participants expressed the belief that the current, unsatisfactory status quo could be overcome if new initiatives were taken by the leaders of both communities. The Deputy Special Adviser attended a meeting of the two sides on 23 October to discuss the current political situation, the context for the Cyprus peace process and confidence-building measures.

8. Within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus peace process under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden, efforts continued to be made to further develop cooperation among the leaders of various religious communities and faith-based institutions living on both sides of the island, in particular Christian and Muslim leaders. The Religious Track also continued to advocate for the religious communities to have access to and care for their places of worship, including cemeteries. During the reporting period, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), together with the Religious Track, facilitated two pilgrimages to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in Larnaca, which saw more than 1,150 pilgrims from the north cross to the south. Law enforcement authorities on both sides facilitated the smooth passage. These were only the second and third pilgrimages in recent years to this important site for Muslims, marking a significant positive development. Within the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees, the Religious Track cooperated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Cyprus, civil society organizations and faith-based communities to provide support to refugees and asylum-seekers.

9. An increase in activity by civil society groups recorded in the previous reporting period continued through the end of 2024, with many calling for a resumption of negotiations and reunification and the opening of new crossings, notwithstanding continued frustration and underlying doubt that a negotiated settlement remained possible.

10. Lastly, the two leaders also met informally in Nicosia on 10 December at the end-of-year reception hosted by the Deputy Special Adviser.

### **IV. Status of the process: activities of the Secretary-General's mission of good offices**

11. The Secretary-General's mission of good offices promoted intra-island contact, cooperation and trust-building and engaged with international partners regarding the activities of the mission. The Deputy Special Adviser held 54 meetings with the two leaders and their representatives, political parties, religious leaders, civil society organizations, including women and youth groups, the European Union, the World

Bank and the diplomatic community, as well as with visiting senior officials from Member States' capitals.

12. The dialogue with representatives of both sides continued at three levels: meetings convened by the Deputy Special Adviser with the Greek Cypriot negotiator and the Turkish Cypriot special representative; meetings convened by the Secretary-General's mission of good offices with the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot coordinators of the technical committees; and meetings convened by the United Nations facilitators of the 12 technical committees with members from both communities represented in the committees.

13. Almost weekly meetings between the Deputy Special Adviser, the Greek Cypriot negotiator and the Turkish Cypriot special representative were held to support the work of the 12 technical committees, to discuss other issues of mutual interest and to support the two sides in the discussions on crossings following the informal dinner of the Secretary-General on 15 October. Those regular meetings facilitated by the Secretary-General's mission of good offices provided an avenue for the sides to provide political guidance to the technical committees, address issues of concern and contribute to the promotion of the continued implementation of projects and initiatives.

14. The technical committees, originally formed in 2008 by the leaders of the two communities in the context of the peace process to improve the daily lives of Cypriots, continued to meet and work under the auspices of the Secretary-General's mission of good offices. With UNFICYP support, the good offices mission coordinated and facilitated the work of the committees with a view to sustaining dialogue and cooperation between the two communities and addressing challenges and shared issues of importance.

15. Activities of the technical committees continued at a constructive level, notwithstanding the usual summer period slowdown, with a total of approximately 100 meetings conducted across all committees. While some committees, such as those on broadcasting, gender equality, humanitarian matters and crisis management, faced delays, others, including those on the environment, cultural heritage, culture and crossings, implemented new initiatives and/or maintained regular engagement.

16. The Technical Committee on Environment remained active from June to December, with projects being implemented at various stages, namely, "Exploring the geological heritage of the island of Cyprus", "Environmental caretakers: empowering youth on environment" and "Preserving biodiversity: analysing poison use in remote wildlife habitats". A project proposal to study and develop responses to pests that could devastate citrus trees and other crops across the island was approved in November.

17. The Technical Committee on Culture is working on several initiatives to bring together artists from both sides. The implementation of "Channels to culture and cooperation", a website that will facilitate the exchange of experiences and information on cultural matters across the island, is ongoing.

18. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage oversaw the restoration of various sites of cultural and historical importance during the second half of the year, including the Evdim mosque and the Avios Theodoros church. In addition, on 25 October, the Committee launched an interactive educational programme on shared cultural heritage for Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot young people.

19. The Technical Committee on Crossings met regularly and finalized the discussions on an enlargement project for the existing Agios Dometios/Metehan crossing point in Nicosia, where persistent delays are caused by a lack of sufficient lanes and personnel for document checks. The implementation of the project is expected to start in September 2025. Upon its completion, the enlargement of this crossing is anticipated to significantly facilitate movement between the two sides.

20. The Technical Committee on Education established a focus group to propose joint educational projects, such as a project for the promotion of contact and increased cooperation between students from both communities at all educational levels related to the environment and sustainable development. Committee members also exchanged educational material for teaching history in their communities. Notwithstanding the suspension by the north of the Committee's involvement in the "Imagine" peace education project, the highly popular initiative continues, now implemented by civil society organizations.

21. The Technical Committee on Health hosted an event of its vector-borne diseases project on mosquitoes, while the Veterinary Subcommittee was delayed in taking up the issue of pets crossing the Green Line but finally launched discussions in the second half of November.

22. The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters met regularly to discuss ways to further enable intra-island trade. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters continued to enjoy good cooperation and exchange of information on criminal matters between the two sides as part of the Committee's Joint Contact Rooms. Significant projects, such as the Crisis Management Committee's disaster protocol for communications and response and the "Switch to green energy" initiative under the Technical Committee on Broadcasting and Telecommunication, remained stalled.

23. Both sides observed that the Technical Committees on Humanitarian Affairs and on Gender Equality required additional encouragement to meet more regularly and be more active, given that the Committees met, respectively, only once and twice during the reporting period. Furthermore, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality required more political support to take forward the implementation of the action plan on how to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the settlement process/an eventual settlement process.

24. Since 2019, the continuous support provided through the support facility, administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has enabled the committees to commission studies, organize events and implement other ad hoc projects, raising the impact and visibility of their work. The support facility was extended for another year.

25. With the aim of addressing the energy isolation experienced by the entire island, discussions with the two sides on a potential joint solar power plant in the buffer zone continued during the reporting period. A pre-feasibility study presented earlier envisaged a photovoltaic plant with financial support from the European Union if the project were to be agreed. Such a power plant would contribute to increased intra-island cooperation in the energy sector, bolster the green transition on both sides and pave the way for other solar power projects across the island. Its completion will depend on flexibility to address the concerns of both parties.

26. The Secretary-General's good offices mission continued to support women's full, meaningful and effective participation in all peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts in Cyprus. Notably, the gender parity reached in membership of the technical committees in the previous reporting period has been maintained. Women civil society actors have increasingly come together from across the political spectrum on both sides in order to promote an urgent solution to the Cyprus issue. An example of this is the Cyprus Women's Bicomunal Coalition, supported by the Embassy of Ireland. The Coalition conducted a working visit to Belfast, United Kingdom, and Dublin in September to learn more about the peace process that led to the Good Friday Agreement.

27. An increased number of briefings by the Secretary-General's good offices mission to international community representatives based on the island and to

members of visiting delegations took place during the reporting period compared with recent periods, reflecting an uptick in interest in the Cyprus peace process following the work of the Personal Envoy in the first half of the year and the informal dinner of the Secretary-General on 15 October. In addition, the mission's focus on creating opportunities for interaction with groups of students and young adults, from the island or visiting from abroad, was sustained. Those engagements contributed meaningfully to awareness and opinion-shaping among those demographics, aligning with the youth, peace and security agenda and efforts on fostering the constructive participation of young people.

28. Significant progress was made in leveraging sports as a tool for fostering mutual understanding and breaking down prejudices. On 15 October, the Secretary-General's good offices mission hosted the first screening of "Winds of Change", a documentary that captures the historic circumnavigation of Cyprus in 2023 by a group of young Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The screening drew a large and diverse audience, many of whom rarely have the opportunity to interact. A similar spirit of unity emerged with the launch of another sports-based initiative centred on beach tennis, bringing young people from both communities together. With the support of UNDP, the good offices mission assisted "Runite", a bicommunal running association, in organizing the island's first coast-to-coast run. This event saw two groups of runners depart from Kyrenia in the north and Larnaca in the south on 23 November, converging in Nicosia in an effort to foster people-to-people connections across the divide.

29. The idea of preserving existing intra-island economic ties while fostering new ones also remained a prominent message of the mission during the reporting period. It was highlighted during the opening session of the fifth Cyprus Forum, one of the largest policy events, on 3 October, with the Deputy Special Advisor delivering a keynote speech. The theme was further underscored in United Nations-World Bank consultations held in October. To address trade-related problems, in particular concerning banking and financial matters, the Turkish Cypriot side proposed the establishment of a technical committee.

30. During the reporting period, Green Line Regulation trade reached close to 13 million euros by the end of October 2024, a slightly lower level compared with the corresponding period in 2023.

31. The two working groups, on environmental peacebuilding and on business, innovation and entrepreneurship, led jointly by the Secretary-General's good offices mission and UNFICYP, continued to meet regularly. Both missions supported the 2024 Local Conference of Youth in Nicosia in August, in advance of the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which the co-Chairs of the Technical Committee on Environment also attended. The good offices mission also supported the United Nations Youth Champions for Environment and Peace workshops held in October. The workshops helped 24 young participants from both communities by fostering contact and greater understanding and enhancing their skills to advocate for bicommunal environmental action related to building peace and to establish and manage projects, which UNFICYP is supporting. The working group on business, innovation and entrepreneurship continued its engagement on ways to promote discussion and raise awareness on expanding intra-island trade, with a focus on young entrepreneurs, especially in less-explored sectors such as the fashion industry.

## V. Observations

32. Notwithstanding the efforts during the previous reporting period by my Personal Envoy, who worked intensively with the parties and engaged a wide spectrum of

actors, both on the island and internationally, regrettably, no common ground had been found between the leaders on the way forward on the Cyprus issue. I nevertheless welcome that the two leaders agreed to some constructive next steps during the informal dinner that I convened on 15 October 2024. During the dinner, I also encouraged the leaders to consider how to bridge the gap in their positions and rebuild trust to allow movement leading to a settlement. Even while I acknowledge the sombre anniversaries of the past year, I urge all Cypriots to focus on the future in order to avoid a perpetual stalemate.

33. It is also important, at this stage and after the findings of my Personal Envoy, to have a critical look at the way forward through an informal broader meeting with the sides and the guarantor Powers. I call upon all relevant stakeholders to consider earnestly how to ensure that this next engagement, which has raised hope among Cypriots that a mutually acceptable way forward remains possible, is open and constructive.

34. In the meantime, I encourage the sides to demonstrate a spirit of compromise with respect to the discussions related to crossing points, given that an agreement on this issue would be a meaningful signal of political will ahead of any broader format meeting. To this end, as agreed in October, I would also encourage the leaders to meet in Cyprus to explore the possibility of opening new crossings at an opportune time. The island has seen a record number of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots crossing between the two sides in recent years. The increase in the number of crossings, combined with chronic delays, has led to constant, yet avoidable, long waiting times, which have an impact on regular commuters, workers, students and efforts to trade between the two sides. I encourage the two leaders to conclude an agreement on crossing points without delay. In addition, the work progressing under the Technical Committee on Crossings to expand and improve the Agios Dometios/Metehan crossing point, representing a majority of the traffic between the two sides, is encouraging. Adequate financing should be sourced and the parties should move forward swiftly with project implementation.

35. I commend the important achievements during the reporting period of the active technical committees. Although all the committees remain an established framework accepted by both sides, and it is laudable that they continue to function, notwithstanding the absence of active negotiations, there continue to be certain limitations to progress tied closely to the political will of the leaders. In addition, the committees' important contributions are often unknown, and there is a reluctance at times on the part of the sides to advertise their work to the wider public. I call upon the leaders to provide stronger political support to the work of the committees.

36. I appreciate the continuous support of the European Union for the technical committees through its support facility, administered by UNDP, and welcome the decision to fund the support facility for another year, through the end of 2025. I call upon the leaders and their representatives to ensure that this support is fully utilized in a mutually agreed manner and to the benefit of all Cypriots.

37. I once again echo the Security Council's call for greater engagement with civil society and urge the two leaders to encourage contact and cooperation between the two communities. I call upon the leaders to also aim for more inclusive cooperation and links between the two communities now and, ultimately, in the peace process and to effectively engage and involve women, minorities, young people and persons with disabilities in discussions related to a shared future on the island and incorporate their views accordingly. Participants in the outreach activities undertaken by my mission of good offices have consistently shown a great interest in engaging with their political leaderships on issues of importance and have demonstrated the value of more inclusiveness.

38. As the meaningful participation of women increases the chances of political solutions being reached and sustained, the leaders should, as a matter of priority, implement relevant recommendations of the action plan on how to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the settlement process/an eventual settlement process, including by ensuring that their delegations participating in talks about possible future negotiations include no more than two thirds of any gender. Although the membership of the 12 technical committees has reached gender parity, the recommendation of the action plan for the leaders to conduct public information-sharing about the benefits of a settlement, to reinforce contact and build trust between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, should be prioritized without delay, including by identifying an effective platform for sustained and regular outreach with civil society, women and youth organizations. It is clear, not only in Cyprus, but also globally, that only when women participate in developing political solutions to conflicts in an equal manner can sustainable peace be reached.

39. A focus on intra-island trade and increasing economic ties, as a means of reconnecting the two communities separated for decades, continued to be at the forefront of the mission's outreach and advocacy efforts. These efforts can realize their potential in full only with clear signs of support from the highest levels in each community. I therefore regret the persistent obstacles to Green Line Regulation trade. I urge that these obstacles, as well as challenges concerning banking and financial matters, be addressed urgently.

40. I urge the two sides to explore cooperating in sports to bring young people together and foster interaction between the two communities. The formation of a related technical committee in this regard remains a viable course of action.

41. I am concerned by the persistent unilateral actions by both sides in and around the buffer zone, which could permanently alter the military status quo of the area and which are not conducive to the broader peace process. I also continue to be concerned about the situation in the fenced-off area of Varosha and note that the position of the United Nations on Varosha remains unchanged. I recall the decisions of the Security Council on the matter, notably in its resolutions [550 \(1984\)](#) and [789 \(1992\)](#), and underscore the importance of adhering fully to those resolutions.

42. I commend the Governments of Greece and Türkiye for their steadfast commitment to the promotion of peaceful neighbourly relations. The commitment to pursuing channels of communication, notwithstanding long-standing disagreements on specific issues, also serves as an example for the Cyprus peace process. Considering the important role and responsibility that the guarantor Powers of Greece, Türkiye and the United Kingdom have in the Cyprus context, I encourage all of them to continue to urge the two leaders in Cyprus to engage in dialogue and to seek a mutually acceptable way forward with the required political will, creativity and openness to compromise.

43. I remain committed to maintaining contact and dialogue with the parties, as well as with the guarantor Powers, in search of a path towards a peaceful settlement, and remain guided by relevant Security Council resolutions that have established United Nations parameters.

44. I would like to thank the partners once again, including the European Union and the World Bank, that have continued to provide support to the work of both United Nations missions in Cyprus, UNDP and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and have contributed to the implementation of confidence-building measures. Lastly, I would like to thank my Deputy Special Adviser and the personnel serving in my good offices mission in Cyprus for the dedication and commitment that they have brought to their 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 2723 (2024)**

This submission is made in response to the encouragement in UN Security Council Resolution 2723 (2024), to “*the leaders of the two communities to provide written updates every six months 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 7, 8, 9 and 10, 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 United Nations Secretary General. 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 Force’s host country.

#### **I. Efforts to resume the peace process**

It is my steadfast conviction that a solution to the Cyprus problem on the mutually agreed federal basis endorsed by the UN Security Council constitutes the only viable and sustainable path forward, which can secure the vital interests of Cyprus and all Cypriots. At the same time, it is the only path towards ensuring and safeguarding security and stability in the wider Eastern Mediterranean region. This parameter is of fundamental significance in light of the ongoing regional and international geopolitical developments.

I reiterate my commitment to the peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem exclusively on the basis prescribed by relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the High-Level Agreements and in line with the UN Charter.

I reaffirm my commitment to the *acquis* of the negotiations and the body of work, that has been accomplished up until the closure of the Conference on Cyprus in Crans Montana, in July 2017, which comprises the agreed basis of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality as prescribed in relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the convergences achieved on all negotiating chapters and the six points presented by the UN Secretary General in Crans Montana.

I wish to express my utmost appreciation to the UN Secretary General for his steadfast commitment and to his Personal Envoy Ms. María Angela Holguín Cuéllar for her efforts towards charting a positive path for the resumption of a formal process of negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus problem. We are also profoundly grateful to the UN Security Council for its steadfast support.

I have genuinely engaged with the Personal Envoy throughout her mission, with a view to enable the accomplishment of her task in the context of the UN Secretary General’s good offices mission and the mandate prescribed by UN Security Council Resolutions. I repeatedly expressed my readiness to meet with the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community under the auspices of the Personal Envoy, with a view to expediting discussions and providing an impetus to the effort to achieve progress. Unfortunately, this had proved unattainable, due to persistent refusal by Mr Tatar.

The Personal Envoy presented her report to the UN Secretary General in July 2024, following which the UNSG suggested to hold a meeting under his auspices,



between myself and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, to discuss the way forward. Successive attempts to set a date for this meeting during the months of August and September were met with the same obstacles, namely the lack of willingness and the employment of delaying tactics on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot side.

The UNSG's concerted effort, which we fully supported, finally made it possible to hold the meeting in New York on 15 October.

I took part in the meeting with a positive spirit and I have tabled proposals with a view to facilitating the UNSG in his effort to chart a positive way ahead. I expressed my readiness to continue to work with the Personal Envoy in the period ahead, however her mission could not be renewed due to the refusal of the Turkish Cypriot side.

Despite the obstacles, agreement was found on the UNSG proposal to convene under his auspices, an informal meeting in a broader format in the near future, to discuss the way forward. We have also agreed to meet in Cyprus to explore the possibility of opening new crossing points.

I stand ready to immediately engage on next preparatory steps, with a view to ensuring that the broader meeting will be successful, ideally by leading to the formal resumption of negotiations or at least to the identification of next tangible steps towards that end.

During the discussion that took place at the dinner, I expressed my readiness to inter alia, proceed with: (i) the establishment of an additional Technical Committee on Youth, a proposal that was made by Under-Secretary General Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo during her visit to Cyprus in March 2023, (ii) the establishment of a civil society consultative body under the title "Coming Together" with a view to further promoting the participation of civil society in the peace process, and (iii) the establishment of a "Truth Commission for Cyprus".

All of the aforementioned proposals were rejected by Mr Tatar.

With regard to the opening of new crossing points, upon returning to Cyprus, we initiated the discussion in the context of the meetings that take place between our representatives. From our part, we immediately submitted our proposals. Once again, the response of our counterparts, has, so far, led the effort to a standstill, because the Turkish Cypriot side wishes to set a precondition for the prior construction of the Arsos-Pyla road. This is tantamount to a selective and one-sided implementation of the relevant understanding that was reached last year, following the move forward by the Turkish Forces and the assault against UN peacekeepers that was unequivocally condemned by the UN Security Council. I recall that the said understanding inextricably entails both the construction of the road and the creation of a residential zone in the area, and that the sticking point inhibiting its implementation has been the Turkish Cypriot side's retraction from the construction of the residential zone.

Despite these obstacles, I have expressed my readiness and have requested the United Nations to convene a meeting between myself and Mr Tatar, to discuss ways to overcome challenges and to achieve results.

I remain steadfastly committed to continuing the effort towards the promotion of a wider positive atmosphere between all involved, including further initiatives in the context of EU – Türkiye relations, and beyond. In the EU context, Türkiye's own constructive engagement will be instrumental in advancing the various areas of cooperation.

The participation of Türkiye's Foreign Minister Mr. Fidan in the informal meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers in Brussels last August, as well as the

opportunities that I had to meet with Türkiye's President Mr. Erdogan and Foreign Minister Mr. Fidan in Budapest on 7 November in the margins of the European Political Community summit, as well as once more with Mr Fidan in Baku on 12 November, in the context of COP29, were steps in the right direction, both in terms of substance and in relation to their symbolism, and they constitute proof that an alternative paradigm in our relations can be both feasible and mutually beneficial. Moreover, the Republic of Cyprus has not blocked the candidacy of Türkiye for the post of the Secretary General of the OSCE. It is noted that our candidacy for the Chairpersonship of the OSCE for 2027 has been tabled.

In the same spirit, we continue the implementation and further enhancement of our supportive policies towards our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, ensuring that they are able to enjoy to the largest possible extent the benefits that they are entitled to, as citizens of the Republic of Cyprus, and as citizens of the EU. These measures concern the areas of facilitation of access to government services and benefits, applications for citizenships, response to pharmaceutical needs and medical services, facilitation of crossings of persons through the authorized crossing points, covering the full operational cost of the bi-communal sewerage plant after their persistent failure to cover the agreed share after cost, facilitation of enhanced access to religious monuments. On the issue of trade, six additional products have been added to the list of processed-foods of non-animal origin that can be traded under the EU's Green Line Regulation. The value of Green Line Trade reached a new record-high of €16.046 million in 2023 (€14.6 in 2022), reflecting steady increase and growth. Their implementation is yet another manifestation of our concrete determination to work for a conducive environment towards reaching a breakthrough, and is additional to an array of benefits and programs already available to our Turkish Cypriot compatriots.

Regrettably, the creation and cultivation of a positive environment, conducive to the resumption of negotiations, continues to be impeded by Türkiye's policies which raise tensions and create new *faits accomplis* on the ground.

This approach is manifested, *inter alia*, by the following:

- i. The continuation of Türkiye's refusal to uphold the commitment to the agreed basis of bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, and the active promotion of the position for "sovereign equality" and "equal international status", which essentially amounts to a call for a "two-state" solution, in clear violation of the UNSC Resolutions
- ii. The systematic and deliberate public rhetoric, which is aimed at undermining the prospects for the resumption of the peace process.
- iii. The continued refusal and lack of compliance with relevant UNSC Resolutions calling for the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants and the continuation of efforts to "open the city as part of the 'trnc'", along with a continued reported limitation on the movement of UNFICYP therein.
- iv. The continuation of "moves forward" into the buffer zone, south of the Turkish Forces' ceasefire line. Violations reported in the UNSG Report on UNFICYP's operations in July 2024 continue uninhibited.
- v. The continuous threats to proceed with the construction of a road in the buffer zone in the Pyla area, linking the occupied areas with the TK15 advanced position of the Turkish Forces, in violation of the status quo and the understanding reached in October 2023. I wish to recall the assault against UN Peacekeepers in the area in August 2023, that was strongly condemned in the UNSC Press Statement of 21 August 2023.

vi. The continuation of efforts in pursuit of the international upgrading of the illegal secessionist entity, contrary to international law and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, in particular 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), which provide that the declaration of the so-called “trnc” is legally invalid and call on all states not to recognize, facilitate or in any way assist the aforementioned secessionist entity.

vii. The persistence of the Turkish Cypriot side to demand the conclusion of a “Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)” with the UN, in conjunction with threatening to curtail UNFICYP’s activities in the occupied areas. This runs contrary to the legally binding principle that such agreements are being concluded only between the UN and the governments of UN Member States that host peacekeeping operations; in this case, the Republic of Cyprus, as enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution 186 (1964) and reaffirmed in numerous subsequent Resolutions.

viii. The illegal exploitation of properties in the occupied part of Cyprus belonging to Greek Cypriot displaced persons, has also continued unabated, and seems to have acquired new dimensions via the systematic promotion of “foreign real estate investment”, contrary to fundamental principles of International Law and relevant rulings by the European Court of Human Rights in a multitude of cases. Apart from the flagrant illegality of such actions, this constitutes yet another attempt to solidify the illegal *fait accompli* and to further curtail prospects for a solution by permanently altering the property situation.

ix. The continuation of the upgrading of Türkiye’s military capabilities and infrastructure in the occupied part of Cyprus, - including through the creation of a naval and drones base - that does not only impact the situation in Cyprus, but also the military equilibrium and security in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Against this backdrop, I wish to highlight the critical importance, especially at this sensitive juncture, for the UN Security Council to call on Türkiye and the Turkish Cypriot leadership to respect the basis for a solution as prescribed in the relevant Resolutions, and to stop impeding efforts towards the creation of a positive perspective.

Of equal importance is the need to refrain from additional provocations and violations, both on the ground (buffer zone, Varosha, occupied areas) but also in the maritime zone of the Republic of Cyprus.

Having in mind the serious challenges for peace and security in the broader region and around the globe, I reiterate my strong determination to spare no effort in pursuit of a breakthrough that would lead us to a resumption of negotiations and the achievement of a solution on the basis prescribed by UN Security Council Resolutions. I earnestly hope that all other involved parties will engage in a spirit of good will towards this end, pursuing win-win solutions that will guarantee the legitimate interests of all Cypriots and will serve the indispensable need for an era of peace, prosperity, security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

## II. Effective mechanism for military contacts

Given the need to defuse tensions, I maintain my readiness to discuss the establishment of a mechanism for military contacts between the opposing forces in Cyprus, facilitated by UNFICYP.

Such a mechanism will comprise the National Guard and the Turkish occupation forces, at the level of their Commanders or their designated representatives, facilitated by UNFICYP at the respective level, in accordance with its mandate as prescribed by UN Security Council Resolution 186 (1964).

Establishing the mechanism can be helpful, taking into account the continuous violations of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions in Varosha, violations and provocative actions along the buffer zone, the obstructions and interference on behalf of the Turkish occupation forces to UNFICYP's ability to perform its duties, and the continuous upgrading of Türkiye's military infrastructure in the occupied part of Cyprus.

### **III. Committee on Missing Persons**

The work of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP) remains a fundamental aspect of the peace process and the support of all parties is indeed imperative. To draw attention and to express support to the vitally important humanitarian work of the CMP, upon my initiative, a joint visit by myself and Mr Tatar to the anthropological laboratory of the CMP took place on July 28, 2023 and a joint call has been issued to accelerate the process of location, exhumation and identification of remains of missing persons.

Türkiye has a legal and an ethical obligation to provide information from its archives, so as to help determine the fate of missing persons in Cyprus. Full information must include primary locations of burial of missing persons, as well as secondary locations given that a great number of remains were intentionally relocated. Türkiye also has an obligation to protect those burial sites, against construction and rehabilitation of the ground and to provide the CMP with full and unhindered access to those areas.

Given the critical passage of time, I wish to reiterate my call for information from all countries and organizations that had a military or police presence in Cyprus in 1963, 1964 and 1974, and might be in possession of relevant archives.

It is also imperative for the Turkish Cypriot side to engage more constructively and to contribute towards addressing the existing imbalance in the ratio of identifications of missing persons.

### **IV. Technical Committees**

The Technical Committees continue their work under UN auspices aiming to alleviate the daily life of people from the adverse effects of the status quo, within the framework of their terms of reference as agreed between the leaders of the two communities since 8 July 2006. Their work constitutes an integral part of the peace process and subsequently of the overall effort for a solution.

Being fully aware of the importance attached by the UNSC to the aspect of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the peace process, I reaffirm my commitment to ensure - including through further appointments - that the Greek Cypriot membership of the Technical Committees will adhere to gender parity, and that the participation of youth is going to be further increased.

During the reporting period, the Technical Committees continued to undertake a number of initiatives further building on their important work and have continued to benefit from the invaluable support provided through the financial Support Facility funded by the European Union, for which I would like to reiterate my appreciation.

Regrettably, there have been cases of their work being impeded, as a result of attempts by the Turkish Cypriot side to use the Technical Committees as vehicles for the promotion of cooperation between “separate administrations” in the overall context of its “two states” policy. This approach has led to delays, setbacks and even the suspension of certain projects, in particular those that bear greater potential to contribute towards a more conducive environment and to have wider outreach and impact among the society and subsequently towards the strengthening of the prospect for a solution and reunification.

The most indicative example remains the Technical Committee on Education, where, despite our repeated calls and by the UN and international partners, the Turkish Cypriot side has yet to reverse the decision it took in October 2022 to suspend its participation in the award-winning peace education project “Imagine”, and continues to hamper the implementation of another project aimed at developing lesson modules that promote peace and reconciliation through education. Since its first launch in October 2017, “Imagine” has provided the opportunity to thousands of students and hundreds of teachers in both communities to take part in this peace education effort, and is widely recognized as having made a very significant contribution to the promotion of a culture of peace and reconciliation.

In relation to the workings of other Committees, the Technical Committee on Culture is implementing ideas from the follow-up networking event bringing together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot artists. The creation of a website to highlight the work of the Technical Committee is also continuing.

The Technical Committee on Crossings continues its work in the direction of improvement of the operation of existing crossing points. Recently, the Technical Committee has agreed on a plan to improve the road network at the Ayios Dometios crossing point.

The Technical Committee on Gender Equality has continued its work on the implementation of the recommendations included in the Action Plan for women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the peace process.

The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters continues discussions on ways to further advance trade through the “Green Line Regulation” and on other issues of economic and trade nature.

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters has maintained a well-functioning channel for contact and communication through the Joint Contact Rooms (JCRs), in the effort to effectively respond to criminal activity.

The Technical Committee on Health has further continued its exchange of information relating to infectious diseases, including the monitoring of epidemics and dangerous mosquito species. It has also continued to provide a channel to respond to requests on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot community for the provision of certain medicines and health treatments.

The Technical Committee on Crisis Management has continued discussions on a simplified proposal submitted by the Greek Cypriot members for a crisis response procedure, prescribing the steps to be undertaken for effective response in the event of a natural or human-caused disaster, and has initiated a discussion on earthquake preparedness and response.

The Technical Committee on the Environment has maintained engagement on a variety of issues such as the exchange of information on tackling threats to trees and crops posed by a variety of pests, and, in this regard, a project with the name “Enhancing Resilience: A Methodological Approach to Coordinated Pest Management” has recently been approved. It has maintained a steady output of work

while undertaking regular visits to areas of environmental interest, recording needs and implementing projects previously approved, including the cleaning of water sources for wildlife.

The Technical Committee on Telecommunications and Broadcasting continues its work to implement the project “Transition to Green Energy: The Future of Electronic Telecommunications”, while maintaining a channel to address radiofrequency interference.

The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Issues has resumed its meetings and is expected to soon be able to present tangible progress in its work.

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage continues its outstanding work for the restoration of monuments of Cyprus’ cultural heritage. The Committee has rightfully received broad acknowledgement and recognition over the years, and should be further supported in order to be able to continue and further enhance its important work.

Lastly, I concur with the Secretary General’s assessment in the Report on his Good Offices Mission of July 2024, that *“While underscoring the importance of the work of the technical committees and the positive impact that confidence-building measures could have, I believe that only genuine progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for negotiations leading to a mutually acceptable settlement will reassure Cypriots as well as the international community that a peaceful and shared future on the island truly remains possible.”*

## Annex II

### **Actions taken by the Turkish Cypriot Side in support of the relevant parts of the Security Council Resolution 2723 (2024)**

The past six months witnessed many ups and downs. Since I have submitted the written update on the actions taken by the Turkish Cypriot Side in support of the relevant parts of the Security Council Resolution last June, two things remained constant; my unwavering commitment to a negotiated settlement of the 61-year-old Cyprus issue and the rigid stance of the Greek Cypriot side. Let me explain.

This period marked the end of the tenure of the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Ms María Angela Holguín Cuéllar, on 12 July 2024. The Personal Envoy concluded that there is no common ground between the two Sides to start a new and formal negotiation process.

Right before the completion of her sole mandate, which was to explore whether common ground exists or not between the two Sides to start a new and formal negotiation process, I met Ms. Holguín in London on 1 July 2024.

At this last meeting, I understood that she used her tenure to comprehend the real intention of the Greek Cypriot leadership, which excludes a common future based on equality with us, the Turkish Cypriot Side. She had all the evidence before her to reach the conclusion that the sole aim of the Greek Cypriot side was the preservation of its usurped status and, at best, the assimilation of the Turkish Cypriot People into their rule. It is the very status they hijacked 61 years ago which continue to provide for their current comfort zone and enables the Greek Cypriot leadership to pursue its policies of oppression and isolation. This has been the reason why they have been categorically rejecting any attempts towards status equalization and cooperation for the good of our Island and of our Peoples.

At this juncture, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the UN Secretary-General, His Excellency António Guterres and his Personal Envoy for the efforts to pursue the realisation of 3Ds (direct trade, direct flights and direct contacts) courageously throughout her mandate. I put forward the 3Ds as the initial steps for the manifestation of our sovereign equality and equal international status, the reaffirmation of which is essential to start a new and formal negotiation process on this basis. Clearly, there cannot be any justification for preventing my People from enjoying their basic human rights, including direct trade, direct flights, and direct contacts.

On her part, Ms. Holguín has persistently pursued the lifting of the unjust isolation on my People, starting with the 3Ds, as acknowledged by her interlocutors. My expectation, in respect to the realization of 3Ds, has been from the international community, as 3Ds are part of our inherent rights and not open to negotiation with the Greek Cypriot side or subject to their consent. This was a litmus test for the international community to demonstrate its sincerity towards changing the *status quo*, which it deems to be unacceptable and unsustainable. While I cannot apportion blame to the ongoing resistance to implement 3Ds, I can say with confidence that both the international community and the Greek Cypriot side joined forces in ensuring the continuation of the *status quo*.

The appointment of the Personal Envoy could have contributed to a positive atmosphere. Nevertheless, it immediately prompted the Greek Cypriot side to take actions to negate this possibility. This can be the only conclusion we can draw from the resurrection of the hostile policy of the Greek Cypriot side at the same time, threatening individuals with criminal punishment for their lawful property dealings

in the TRNC. A grand scheme has been put into practice, targeting foreign investors in my country, with the main goal of ruining our economy. The tools they have been employing include taking statements under duress, intimidation through threats of imprisonment, and mongering fear. One such symbolic case is a 74-year-old investor who continues to be unlawfully “detained” since June 2024 and is facing 242 counts of “trespass-related” crimes concerning his investments in real estate in the TRNC. Needless to say, he has conducted his activities in accordance with the laws in force in the TRNC which the European Court of Human Rights found to be compliant with international law.

By apprehending foreign property investors, the Greek Cypriot side is also intimidating those involved in the other main sectors of our economy, threatening foreign tourism operators not to organise tours to our side, discrediting our universities, and inciting fear of detention amongst Turkish Cypriots whilst using the crossing points by enforcing domestic laws in violation of international law. This also has the potential to adversely affect the already fragile trust between the two Sides which is the very essence of a sustainable future on the Island.

Nevertheless, I will not be deterred by this gloomy environment. During our last meeting in London with the Personal Envoy, despite the clear absence of common ground, I expressed my readiness to discuss the next steps with my Greek Cypriot counterpart, in a broader format with the participation of the two Motherlands, Republic of Türkiye and Greece.

As this proposal was being entertained by the UN, the Greek Cypriot leadership did not shy away, yet again, from manipulation. First, they officially announced that the mandate of the Personal Envoy was extended. This was followed by more speculation, with official statements alleging the receipt of an invitation from the UN Secretary-General for a leaders’ meeting, prompting a response from the UN denying such an invitation.

On 28 September 2024, I held a bilateral meeting with His Excellency, Mr. Guterres, in New York, within the margins of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I had the opportunity to explain to the Secretary-General, for whom I have utmost respect, the dignified struggle of my People, and the necessity for the reinstatement of my People’s inherent rights. Given the Personal Envoy’s conclusion revealing the inconvenient truth that there is no common ground to start a new negotiation process, I reiterated my proposal to discuss the next steps and accepted the invitation of His Excellency to host an informal dinner without an agenda with the Greek Cypriot leader, followed by a broader informal meeting with the participation of the two Motherlands.

I attended the agreed informal dinner hosted by the UN Secretary-General together with the Greek Cypriot leader on 15 October 2024 at the UN Headquarters in New York. As it is also clear from the Readout of the Secretary-General issued on the same night, the conclusion drawn by the Personal Envoy is now publicly announced; no common ground exists between the two Sides to start a new and formal negotiation process.

During the informal dinner, we have agreed to have an informal meeting in a broader format in the near future, and to meet on the Island in order to explore the possibility of opening new crossing points.

I would like to reiterate my readiness to attend the informal broader meeting to be hosted by the UN Secretary-General. On new crossing points, I have a standing proposal, also supported by the Chambers of Commerce and the business circles from both Sides, to open the first ever crossing point exclusively for commercial and economic activities at Haspolat. The Greek Cypriot side is yet to propose a new



“crossing point” as they insist on repeatedly rejected proposals before my Presidency on transit passages, through the buffer zone and the military areas. Their so-called proposals contradict the mere philosophy and definition of crossing points that were endorsed by the two sides in 2003. Unfortunately, this rigid stance has the potential of negatively affecting our common goal of increasing people-to-people contact.

For almost 14 months, we have been waiting for the UN to solve the problem that would enable us to complete the Yiğitler-Pile road. As it is well-known, this road is indispensable for the Turkish Cypriot residents of Pile, who live in this village with a special status located in the Buffer Zone, to address their daily humanitarian needs. The series of unfortunate events that started in August 2023 created a huge mistrust on the part of the Turkish Cypriot officials towards the UN. This issue cannot be parked. Upon the completion of Yiğitler-Pile road, we will be ready to explore the possibility of opening Haspolat and Akıncılar crossing points.

I believe change is possible in Cyprus. This can be achieved if my counterpart stops resisting to acknowledge the existence of the factual realities on the ground. There exist two States and two Peoples on the Island. To create a new hope for the Island of Cyprus, we need to try to square the circle, as the UN Secretary-General had aptly put, rather than investing in yet another failure.

Fifty-six years of failure has confirmed to us that federation as a model to settle the Cyprus issue is exhausted. As Ms. Holguin also emphasised in her Open Letter of 7 July 2024: *“We need to move away from solutions that in the past have created expectations that were not met and led to greater disagreements and frustrations.”*

I am sincerely committed to a negotiated settlement.

In this context, a different outcome can only be achieved with the status equalisation of the two Sides, through the reaffirmation of our inherent rights, namely sovereign equality and equal international status.

Until then, it will not be possible to find a common ground.

My vision, first and foremost, is for a peaceful co-existence on the Island. We can only achieve this by working together to foster the creation of a culture of cooperation within the framework of good neighbourly relations. This will create an opportunity for the good of the two Peoples, two States, the Island and the region as a whole. Only then can a final settlement be achieved, naturally and within reason, without any bullying.

Confrontation should not be an option for either Side. I urge the Greek Cypriot side to stop their hostile policies towards my People, and to do it now.

## **Technical Committees**

The Technical Committees, are currently the only platform for formal cooperation and communication between the two sides on issues that affect the daily lives of both the Turkish Cypriot People and the Greek Cypriot People, and that cannot be tackled by one side alone. As such, they are an important instrument of trust building in the island of Cyprus. Hence their potential should be more significantly utilised through the appointment of competent officials with decision-making capacities. I still await my Greek Cypriot counterpart to do so, given the fact that the efficient functioning of the Technical Committees, conducted in a manner that serves the mutual interest of both parties, will not only pave the way for the creation of a conducive atmosphere on the Island, but will also play an important role in fostering a culture of cooperation for a sustainable and peaceful future on the island of Cyprus.

The Technical Committee on Health continued working on the ID AIM (The Mapping Risk of Aedes Invasive Mosquito Spread) project and in this context held a final event in October 2024 at Ledra Palace Hotel. The meetings of the Committee also provided for an opportunity to exchange information on the respective health practices that exists on both sides. The Committee is currently discussing means to cooperate on threats arising from global warming related infectious diseases as well as the possibility of cooperating with other committees in assessing the impact of infectious diseases on tourism and the economy. In the reporting period, the discussions of the Veterinary Subcommittee on the crossing of cats and dogs from the crossing points has reached an important level of maturity.

The Technical Committee on Culture has continued to work on fostering collaboration through cultural exchange. The Committee is currently working on finalising two projects, namely Open Studios and Subtitles for Theatres Projects. Both of these were selected by the Committee from a collection of recommendations made by artists who participated at the Connecting Arts 2 event that took place in May 2024. Preparations regarding the launching of a website are also ongoing.

The Turkish Cypriot members of The Technical Committee on Crisis Management have worked diligently to secure an agreement on the Protocol for Effective Communication and Coordination in Times of Unprecedented Natural and Human Made Crisis. The protocol aims at significantly improving the current practice with well-known defects. Nevertheless, agreement have so far not been possible due to the rigid stance adopted by the Greek Cypriot side. As far as earthquake preparedness is concerned, between June and December 2024, the Turkish Cypriot Side made a number of proposals ranging from the establishment of a committee website with UNDP support to create awareness, the convening of the earthquake subcommittee to examine future cooperation avenues, and the organisation of study visits to high-risk earthquake zones. However, the Greek Cypriot side has not responded to any of these proposals rendering the subcommittee inactive through the said period.

The Turkish Cypriot Side actively contributed to the work of the Technical Committee on Education, showing a commitment to meaningful progress. In the reporting period, the Turkish Cypriot Side proposed enhancing collaboration between universities on both sides of the Island by organizing reciprocal visits for faculty members and developing joint projects on global issues such as environmental sustainability, furthering academic cooperation and involving students progressively.

The Technical Committee on Environment has continued working on the implementation of three projects approved last year, namely Geological Heritage of the Island of Cyprus, Environmental Caretakers and Biodiversity. The Committee also agreed on and implemented a project on cleaning water sources for wildlife. The Committee has very recently agreed on a project which will hopefully enhance cooperation on pest management between the two sides.

The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Matters has continued its meetings and discussed an array of issues. The Turkish Cypriot Side presented a project aimed at creating awareness on the role of individuals in saving water for future generations within a humanitarian perspective.

The Technical Committee on Broadcasting and Telecommunications continued its work on issues regarding FM, TV, civil aviation, mobile communication and frequency bands. The Turkish Cypriot members continued their efforts regarding cooperation on green energy in communication sector and to exchange information to prevent frequency interferences. The Committee could so far not implement the webinar on green energy agreed last year due to the fact that the Greek Cypriot side

tried to challenge the agreed modalities. A breakthrough could finally be achieved as a result of the goodwill demonstrated by the Turkish Cypriot Side.

The Technical Committee on Crossings has agreed on the project aimed at reducing congestion at the Metehan crossing. The project involves adding lanes, a sidewalk, and necessary utilities in the said crossing. It is scheduled for implementation in 2025.

The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters has continued working to increasing economic and commercial exchanges between the two sides. The project regarding Young Professionals Internship Program could not be implemented due to the fact that no Greek Cypriot applied for internships in companies based in North Cyprus. The issue of exchange of worn-out Euro banknotes continued to present a challenge, with little progress due to the lack of cooperation from the Greek Cypriot side.

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters has maintained ongoing cooperation on the handing over criminals and the timely exchange of information related to crimes and criminal matters between the two sides.

The Technical Committee on Gender Equality continues working towards the implementation of the Action Plan with a view ensuring the effective and meaningful participation of women from both sides in the creation of a conducive atmosphere for cooperation and in an eventual settlement process.

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage remains dedicated to preserving cultural heritage sites on both sides of the island. The Committee has also strengthened its collaboration with the Technical Committee on Environment, particularly focusing on landscaping efforts around several of its projects. On 25 October, the Committee also launched an Interactive Educational video on cultural heritage.

## **Disruptive Effect of the Greek Cypriot Education System**

There has been no positive change in the education system of the Greek Cypriot side which continues to promote racism and intolerance towards Turkish Cypriots and indoctrinate the young minds with enmity, prejudice, and xenophobia, through educational materials, including textbooks. Strong resistance to change continues to pose an obstacle to building trust and confidence among Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot youth.

The gravity of the problem was evident from the drawings of the Greek Cypriot children on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of 1974 Peace Operation of Türkiye. Greek Cypriot children's output, guided by their teachers, have, once again, vividly illustrated the impact of the Greek Cypriot education system's xenophobic and hatred-infusing programmes.

## **Obstructionist and Isolationist Policies of the Greek Cypriot leadership**

This reporting period witnessed an upward trend in the obstructionist and isolationist policies of the Greek Cypriot leadership towards Turkish Cypriots.

Targeting our economy has been the central goal underpinning these policies. Threats towards the property investors for their lawful dealings in the TRNC is one striking evidence. In the TRNC, Immovable Property Commission, established in 2005 with the guidance of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), continues

to provide effective redress to Greek Cypriot property claimants. The ECtHR-endorsed criteria upon which the Commission decides to strike a fair balance between the Greek Cypriot property claimants and those who have acquired rights on such properties. Despite this effectively functioning, internationally-sanctioned property regime, the Greek Cypriot side has been insisting on prosecuting individuals unlawfully, based upon its domestic law which is in clear violation of international law.

Threats towards foreign tourism operators to deter them from organising tours to our side and attempts to discredit our higher education institutions were other state-sponsored actions undertaken by the Greek Cypriot side to harm our economy.

Inhumane restrictions; on the representation of my People at the international fora, on trade and travel, on communication with the outside world, and hampering of participation in the cultural and sporting activities (such as at the Olympics, Eurovision, FIFA and UEFA organizations) have continued the way they have been for the past 61 years, before the very eyes of the international community.

### **The Committee on Missing Persons (CMP)**

I welcome the new Third Member of CMP, Mr. Pierre Gentile, who has assumed his duties on 27 September 2024.

As the Turkish Cypriot Side, we continue to provide unequivocal support to CMP. This assistance includes providing information, access to corroborated burial sites, as well as financial contributions.

Firstly, the Office of the Turkish Cypriot Member continued to have access to the aerial photos dating from 1974 which assists the CMP to make an informed decision on the burial sites to excavate. Since June 2024, the Office of the Turkish Cypriot Member has checked a total of 32 different coordinates in 27 different regions.

Secondly, CMP has excavated in 50 suspected burial sites in the TRNC during this reporting period, 7 of which were in the military areas. Currently, there are 7 excavation teams actively working throughout the Island. There are 6 ongoing excavations in the TRNC, including in military areas, and 1 in the Greek Cypriot side.

Thirdly, in order to ensure CMP has the necessary financial resources to carry out its activities effectively, TRNC has made further financial contributions. In addition to financing the Office of the Turkish Cypriot Member from the TRNC budget, on 31 October 2024, TRNC made a donation of €100,000, bringing the total additional financial assistance provided to CMP to date to a total of €683,000.

On its part, CMP has continued to deliver for the relatives of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot missing persons who have been waiting to give their loved ones a proper burial. During this reporting period, CMP has identified 4 missing persons on CMP's official list; all of whom were Greek Cypriot.

### **Status of UNFICYP operations in the TRNC**

TRNC Ministry of Foreign Affairs has submitted a counter-proposal on 29 March 2024, upon the request of the UN. The counter-proposal aims at establishing the necessary legal framework on the relationship and the modalities of the operation of UNFICYP within the TRNC and the buffer zone. Our Ministry is expecting an official response from the UN Headquarters.

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## **Hellim/Halloumi**

Six more months after the latest update, the Turkish Cypriot producers can still not trade Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)-compliant Hellim/Halloumi to the European Union (EU) market. Following the adoption of the necessary EU legislation over three-and-a-half years ago, the outstanding issues previously identified persist. There is no body that can conduct the necessary Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks as it has not yet been appointed since the entry into force of the Commission decision in April 2021. Those Turkish Cypriot producers, with PDO-compliant products, still cannot trade their produce and have to wait for the completion of the bureaucratic processes. Yet, they have to face new challenges due to the unilateral measures introduced by the Greek Cypriot side without their knowledge or consent.

The recent attempt of the Greek Cypriot side to register “Cyprus Red Soil Potato” as a Protected Geographical Indication in the European Union for the benefit of Greek Cypriot producers only, while benefiting from the reputation of the potatoes island-wide, is yet another manifestation of exploiting their status to grab a shared product of the Island.

The ongoing discrimination against Turkish Cypriot producers remains an issue of concern and a reminder to my People of the real intention of the Greek Cypriot leadership when it comes to drawing economic benefits from a common cultural product, registered to address the economic disparity between the two economies on the Island.

## **Hydrocarbons**

I regret to report that the opportunity to turn hydrocarbons into an area of cooperation from that of contention has also been missed for this period. I stand behind my cooperation proposal on the co-owned Hydrocarbon resources, dated 1 July 2022, which remains on the table.

## **Maraş**

The number of applications by former Greek Cypriot inhabitants of Maraş to the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) concerning the properties located in the closed part of Maraş has increased to 518 during this period. IPC has continued to process these pending applications before it.

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