

The Heybeliada Talks: **Two Years of Public Diplomacy on Cyprus**



Prepared by: Lenka Peřková

Edited by: Sylvia Tiriyaki & Mensur Akgün



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Foreword

We, as The Open Society Foundation (Turkey), provide support on the basis of the “open society philosophy”, which acknowledges that no one can monopolize absolute knowledge, that people can have different opinions and expectations, and that society needs institutions to protect individuals’ right to live together in peace. We also care deeply about EU-Turkey relations, because we strongly believe that Turkey becomes a more open society as it gets closer to the EU. We also believe that as the EU gets ready to admit Turkey its own open society values grow stronger.

GPoT Center, under the auspices of Istanbul Kültür University, has been involved in various projects related to Turkey’s foreign policy and the relevant region since its establishment. The Cyprus question has been among the top issues on the agenda of the Center. Up until today, GPoT has been able to conduct several projects that have contributed to the rapprochement process between the Cypriot communities.

We have supported the 8th and 9th Cyprus Talks, which were realized by the valuable contribution of academics, politicians and civil society representatives from both parts of the island as well as from Turkey and Greece. These meetings are of paramount importance regarding their potential for the constitution of alternative dialogue channels. A peaceful solution in the island is essential for Turkey’s aspirations for EU membership, and we believe that the second-track diplomacy will certainly reinforce this process. However, what is more crucial for us is to provide support in creating the optimal grounds for different opinion groups from different segments of the society, in order to provide them the same opportunity to advocate their own ideas and future perspectives.

We are very pleased to have supported GPoT in creating an objective discussion platform to discuss a common future for both communities in Cyprus, and we think that the Cyprus Talks project was a success in this regard.

Gökçe Tüylüoğlu, Executive Director
Open Society Foundation, Turkey

This publication is an excellent summary of the several rounds of Heybeliada Talks on Cyprus, which the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty Office in Turkey had the high privilege to take part in.

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Turkey promotes democratization, rule of law and human rights and also the EU-membership of Turkey based on Turkey fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria. As Cyprus has been a major obstacle in the negotiations, FNF has been promoting and supporting the Heybeliada Talks between all relevant and concerned actors involved.

As a foundation based on liberal principles, we strongly believe in dialogue; dialogue based on fair arguments and mutual respect is a prerequisite of the actors' ability to solve the problem, which the population in both parts of the island are suffering from. Friedrich Naumann Foundation sees herself as a neutral mediator in this dialogue and the Talks, encouraging all parties involved to discuss the existing issues fairly and openly.

The Heybeliada Talks have become a tradition to a certain extent, an approach of fair dialogue and discussion. The different individuals representing the different actors involved have built trust and confidence in each other, which is a "condition sine qua non" if such a complex issue and politically-sensitive problem has to be solved.

In this respect, we deeply appreciate and support the efforts of GPoT Center, an institution with high reputation and one of our closest and most reliable partners in our work in Turkey. We also would like to thank every individual from all the parties involved for all their time and energy they have spent over these years. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation is proud to be a member of this dialogue process and will continue with its support.

Jörg Dehnert, Resident Representative

Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Turkey

Preface

This publication is a combination of the work of the GPoT staff and the participants of the 9 rounds of the Heybeliada Talks held to date. Our main objective in preparing this book has been to consolidate the ideas put forth during the past years by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and to have them be accessible to a wider public of policy-makers, media and academics, as well as governments and political figures.

Since its establishment, GPoT Center has been at the forefront in Turkey in terms of keeping the Cyprus issue relevant, bringing together involved parties and working towards a solution. Having spent many years working on the Cyprus problem, it is our hope that this study will shed some light on the concerns and aspirations of the Cypriots, the stumbling blocks in the negotiations so far and, consequently, some of the proposed solutions that parties have come up with. The views expressed in the written contributions by participants of the Heybeliada Talks belong to the authors, and they do not necessarily concur partially or wholly with those of either the GPoT Center or its staff.

As GPoT Center, we have not advocated for any specific solution to the Cyprus problem so far, but rather have been by principle committed to the ideals of dialogue, non-violence, reconciliation and consensus for both the Heybeliada process and the eventual solution. We have, however, increasingly observed that a solution has become absolutely essential, and we hope that the output of this two-year process will have an impact on political figures that have the real power to make positive change. In the light of what was discussed during the round-table meetings, we as GPoT Center propose the following set of recommendations:

- A communication strategy should be implemented to avoid the negative portrayal of the talks in mass media and to stop spreading of misinformation as well as public disillusion over the negotiation process. Responsible journalism aiming to keep the public debate within certain borders, together with stronger leadership from the two presidents, would be the essential preconditions for achievement of this goal.
- Independent advisors should be appointed to monitor the practical issues and trends on the ground in both communities in order to act as a link between the public and the leaders.

- The two Cypriot leaders should honor their commitment to solve the Cyprus question, boldly take up political responsibility towards the voters and put confidence in goodwill gestures and proclamations by the other side. Trust and firm belief in the reliability of the other community will be crucial for maintaining the sustainability of a politically agreed solution.
- Creation of a Cross-communal Task Force composed of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot academics, social scientists and civil society activists would not only function as a useful CMB, it would also give the leaders more freedom to compromise by knowing concessions they are making at the negotiating table are backed by this community of intellectuals and opinion makers. It would be useful if the two leaders stop dealing with the “ghosts” of past failures and look ahead instead.
- A stronger guidance from the UN and implementation of a clear policy on Cyprus by the EU would help take the talks further ahead, especially now that there is a serious time constraint and general anxiety that these talks may well be the very last chance to find a viable solution to the Cyprus question. Involvement of international actors would also provide solid grounds for bringing back the enthusiasm, which was present in both communities at the beginning of the negotiations in 2008.
- Grass-roots inter-communal projects such as establishment of a common radio station or cooperation between universities would create possibilities for more regular communication between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots and thus increase mutual confidence and trust. The civil society should take a more active lead in this endeavour.
- It would be helpful if a meeting between the officials from the EU, UN, Greece and Turkey and representatives of various circles of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot societies would be organized in order to provide the main stakeholders with a genuine opportunity to discuss standpoints and views held by each side.
- Creation of economic interdependency between the two communities via adoption of the Direct Trade Regulation would help discharge existing anomalies in the relations between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, e.g. free access of the Turkish Cypriots to the Greek Cypriot health system. Moreover, the Regulation would also help liberalize the

Turkish Cypriot economy. However, the Greek Cypriot community fears that such steps would lead to indirect recognition of the TRNC.

- It should be highlighted that the property chapter, though complicated, is not insolvable. What seems to hinder the progress is the politicization of the issue. It could be suggested that philosophical understanding between the leaders would allow for a smooth resolution of the matter, as the nature of the chapter is highly technical.

The process that led to these recommendations, and indeed the publication of this book, would not have been possible without the generous financial support from the Open Society Foundation – Turkey. Apart from the sponsorship of this report, with the help of the Foundation GPoT Center was able to organize the eighth and the ninth rounds of the Heybeliada Talks. The implementation of the second-track diplomacy meetings between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots would also not be possible without the permanent support from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation – Turkey. The Foundation generously sponsored many rounds of the talks and backed the whole process with its institutional presence and valuable input.

GPoT Center would like to take this opportunity to express sincere thanks to all participants of the individual rounds of the Heybeliada series, who contributed to the content of this publication intellectually, particularly to those who kindly submitted written contributions. The entire GPoT team, Meltem Abalı, Susae Elanchenny, Nigar Hacızade, Narod Maraşlıyan, Lenka Peťková and Can Yirik, all contributed to the successful realization of this endeavour. The GPoT Center also wishes to thank Gökhan Özen from YA-BA for the cover design and formatting of the book, and, last but not the least, would like to express its gratitude to Dr. Bahar Akingüç Günver, Chairman of the Board of the Trustees, Prof. Dr. Dursun Koçer, Rector, and Özkan Gül, Head of the Financial Office of Istanbul Kültür University, for their support in the realization of this project.

Mensur Akgün, Director & Sylvia Tiryaki, Deputy Director
Global Political Trends Center

Executive Summary

Since July 2008, Global Political Trends Center (GPoT) has been bringing together opinion leaders from North and South Cyprus, as well as Greece and Turkey, under the banner of the “Heybeliada Talks” to discuss issues pertaining to the solution of the Cyprus problem. The meetings, usually closed to journalists and conducted under Chatham House rules, have provided the participants with a trusting environment to frankly debate contested issues, usually in parallel with the official negotiations. During the nine rounds of the second-track diplomacy meetings held in Istanbul, the invited Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot civil society activists, academicians, political experts, opinion leaders and members of the negotiating teams, together with participants from Greece and Turkey, discussed in detail the following topics: the current state of domestic politics on both sides of the divide, the two communities’ perceptions on the federal system and joint governance, trends in the public opinion, the role of the media, civil society and international actors in the search of a comprehensive settlement, the impact of the island’s division on the economy and, last but not least, the prospects of arriving at an agreement on the property chapter.

The participants concluded that the last presidential elections on both sides of the island, i.e. the Greek Cypriot presidential elections of 2008 and the Turkish Cypriot presidential elections of 2010, brought about a new political setting in both communities. According to the invitees, Mr. Christofias and Mr. Eroğlu were elected because of the people’s disillusionment over the pace of the talks and a widespread desire to see an end to the decades-long negotiation process. Some remarked that despite the change in the post of the Turkish Cypriot leader, there is a certain continuity in the negotiating team, because Mr. Eroğlu chose to keep some of the experts who advised the former President, Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat.

Apprehensiveness was expressed over the time constraint and the need to take the talks further ahead as soon as possible. Participants from both sides of the island agreed that the current negotiations might indeed be the very last chance to arrive at a feasible and sustainable solution. It was communicated that it would be helpful if the leaders stopped dealing with the “ghosts” of the past and former failures, and focus entirely on the reality on the ground instead. It was observed that the nature of the negotiations is not collaborative but strongly competitive, thus making it difficult for the parties to compromise. There is a

mutual lack of faith in sincere behavior and both sides are reluctant to put their confidence in statements and promises declared by the other. The participants noted that over time the Cyprus conflict has transformed into a “comfortable conflict”, which on one hand limits the escalation of tensions, but on the other also prevents productivity.

It was proposed that the negotiations should be kept behind closed doors and conducted within the framework of the UN resolutions and international law. The participants concluded on many occasions that the two leaders should honor their commitment to the agreement that has been already reached, the Joint Statements of May 23 and July 1, 2008. The invitees expressed disappointment over the absence of a clear strategy on the side of the EU and a lack of strong guidance from the UN. Some voiced the hope that a more devoted involvement of the UN and the EU might help to bring back the fading public excitement about the ongoing negotiation process.

It has been often underlined that diminishing public support should be taken seriously, because the public on both sides will be called to take part in referenda and thus decide the future of any negotiated agreement. The participants emphasized that the reason for shrinking public support is not the absence of a desire for a solution, but a disappointment over the slow pace of the negotiations and frustration caused by numerous past failures. It was communicated that security, be it physical, financial, professional or proprietary, is the main motivation for the public to support the talks.

The participants also observed that the negative portrayal of the negotiations in the media reinforces pessimistic feelings among Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. It has been repeatedly noted that there is a high level of misinformation, and that the opposing reactions of the masses are thus often based on fallacious pretext. Since print and online newspaper, television and radio still remain the main sources of reference for many people, it is of crucial importance that journalists act responsibly and help keep the public debate within certain borders. The sixth round of the Heybeliada Talks provided the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot journalists with the historic opportunity to meet with the Turkish Prime Minister Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Mr. Egemen Bağış face to face and later transmit their messages to their respective communities. The Heybeliada Talks participants also suggested that it would be helpful to establish a cross-communal task force

group composed of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot academicians, social scientists and civil society activists who would openly back the leaders. The participants expressed the view that it would be useful if statements targeting certain deadlines for the end of the talks were avoided, for when these deadlines are not met, overall disillusionment on both sides of the divide deepens. It would be fruitful if the trends in the two communities would be monitored via independent advisors, who would report to a special working group that would consequently act as a link between the public and the leaders, according to the members of the group.

The participants observed that fear of recognition of North Cyprus by implication still remains one of the major obstacles that hold the Greek Cypriots back from supporting some of the confidence building measures (CBMs). It has been communicated that while implementation of CBMs is very crucial for the overall success of the talks, they do not necessarily always have to be productive. Moreover, implementation of the CBMs also consumes much of the time and energy of the leaders, who need to focus on other aspects of the talks, too. Therefore, the participants suggested that civil society should take on a more active role in supporting the talks on a grass-roots level. It was expressed that the NGOs from across the divide should seek to establish more regular cross-communal contact.

The property issue has often been referred to as one of the most complicated subjects on the agenda. Yet the participants concluded that once the leaders arrive at a philosophical and political understanding, it will not be that difficult to solve the technical aspect of the issue. Hope was expressed that creative proposals agreeable to both sides could possibly be drafted with the help of the newly appointed UN experts. The participants also discussed in detail the concept of urban transformation aiming to develop Cyprus' infrastructure and thus contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in the countryside.

It was communicated that the division of the island has a negative impact not only on the economy of the Turkish Cypriots, who are internationally isolated, but also on the economy of the Greek Cypriots. It was expressed that implementation of the Direct Trade Regulation, which the EU promised to do in 2004, would not only liberalize the economy in the North but would also lead to the creation of economic interdependence between the two communities, thus contributing to the normalization of relations. However, the Greek Cypriot

participants made remarks that their community fears that the adoption of the Regulation would lead to international recognition of the TRNC.

It was further observed that the Greek Cypriot community does not see federation as a just solution and finds it rather difficult to accept the idea of partnership with the Turkish Cypriots in the government. It has been emphasized that the functionality of the federal system will depend on political equality between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. The concept of political equality, however, is not meant to be interpreted in terms of hard numbers but in terms of effective participation of both communities in the governing system. The participants agreed that mutual trust and confidence would be essential for the federal state to function and be sustainable.

Introduction

Ever since its establishment in 2008, the Global Political Trends Center (GPoT Center) has been seeking creative ways aiming to provide effective support to the search for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question. The appearance of Cyprus on GPoT Center's project agenda was a natural outcome of GPoT Center personnel's decades-long active involvement in various attempts intended to solve the island's division. Their efforts on an institutional as well as personal level reached a peak in 2004 when the Annan Plan, drafted under the auspices of the UN Secretary General, was submitted to simultaneous referenda.

April 2004 marked an important milestone in the history of the island. The outcome of the referenda, in which the Turkish Cypriots approved yet the Greek Cypriots rejected the proposed unification, produced serious disillusionment within the circles of the international as well as domestic Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. With the failure of the referenda, activists involved in the peace process started to doubt the prospects of delivering a lasting settlement that would be acknowledged by both Cypriot parties as a win-win solution.

With the entrance of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU, aspirations of ending the division in Cyprus diminished even further at all levels. The peace process was revived once again at the beginning of 2008, when the Greek Cypriot leader Dimitris Christofias, together with his Turkish Cypriot counterpart Mehmet Ali Talat, agreed to restart negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). Before the process was officially launched in September 2008, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon explicitly underlined the importance of the civil society's involvement in the latest joint Cypriot-led endeavour and the need for activities and campaigns that would boost a greater public awareness in his Report on the UN Operation in Cyprus:

"The coming period will not be easy and may require major compromises. It is therefore important for all parties to foster an environment that is conducive to moving the process forward. A flourishing and engaged civil society and an informed citizenry are important elements in that endeavour. Those elements will help Cypriots understand what they will be called to agree upon, so that any future settlement will be

sustainable. I encourage the sides to find the best means to facilitate the active involvement of Cypriot civil society in the debate on the future of their country.”⁶

Motivated by a faithful commitment to its Cyprus program, GPoT Center saw the revival of the negotiations between the two Cypriot leaders as a unique opportunity to step in and support the official talks indirectly via public diplomacy. Sharing the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s belief in the importance of civil society’s role in breaching the impasse and as a strong supporter of the ideals of dialogue, reconciliation and consensus, GPoT Center felt the need to fill in the communication gap on the public level, which hinders coordination of the efforts of both Cypriot communities. It is in this context that the idea of second-track diplomacy meetings, which would enable the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots to discuss obstacles hampering progress towards a settlement of the Cyprus problem in parallel with the official negotiations, was born. This series of talks was named after the island of Heybeliada, one of the Princes’ Islands in the Marmara Sea, where the first round of the talks was held.

Since the aim of the Heybeliada Talks was to create an atmosphere of mutual trust that would enable the participants to express the positions of their respective communities more openly, and consequently frankly debate contesting views and find common ground, all meetings were closed to the press and conducted under Chatham House rules. The only exception to this strict procedure was the sixth round-table, which was specially tailored for Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot journalists, who were given a historic opportunity to meet with the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Turkish Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış. This meeting was widely covered by the press in both parts of the island and, as expressed by Greek Cypriots, had a tremendous impact on the perceptions of the Greek Cypriot community regarding Turkey’s sincerity in solving the Cyprus question. The initiative was also noticed by the UN Secretary General, who noted:

“Regional and international stakeholders have stepped up their support for the peace talks. The Greek Prime Minister noted the important progress and reiterated his support for Mr. Christofias’ approach to the negotiations during his visit to

⁶ United Nations Secretary General. (2008, June 2). *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus*. S/2008/353, para. 46.

Cyprus in April 2010. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan restated Turkey's goal of achieving a lasting comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem during an interview with the Greek Cypriot media."⁷

Even though GPoT Center has an extensive network of contacts in both parts of Cyprus, it appreciated greatly the initiative of the Heybeliada participants to use their own acquaintances for getting in touch with prospective keynote speakers. GPoT Center appreciates that the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots perceived the Heybeliada Talks as their own endeavour. It was the result of the joint efforts of the GPoT Center and the Heybeliada participants that high-level representatives from both parts of the island accepted invitations to join the group for open discussion. As a direct outcome of this endeavour, one of the first rounds of the Heybeliada Talks organized in 2008 were carried out with the presence of then Turkish Cypriot President Mehmet Ali Talat. A year later, the group was able to interact directly with the Turkish Cypriot First Lady, Mrs. Oya Talat. The participation of the General Secretary of AKEL (Progressive Party for the Working People) Mr. Andros Kyprianou in the ninth round of the series was also a direct outcome of the joint efforts of GPoT Center and the keenly involved participants. Among other high-level political figures that joined the Heybeliada process were former MP for DISY, Ms. Katie Clerides; former head of the Cyprus EU negotiation team, Mr. Takis Hadjidemetriou; property expert on the Turkish Cypriot negotiation team, Mr. Serden Hoca; President of the United Democrats, Ms. Praxoula Antoniadou Kyriacou; Associate Professor at the Eastern Mediterranean University, Mr. Kudret Özersay; and former CTP MP and Advisor to Mehmet Ali Talat, Mr. Özdil Nami.

While the specific and primary aim of the round-tables was to serve the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot civil activists by creating a platform for second-track diplomacy discussions, the general goal of the project was to open up communication pathways on all kinds of levels between all segments and groups of the two Cypriot societies. One of these levels was the missing link between the high-level officials and members of the negotiating teams with civil society from both parts of Cyprus as well as from Greece and Turkey.

⁷ United Nations Secretary General. (2010, May 11). *Report of the Secretary General on His Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus*. S/2010/238, para. 18.

The topics discussed during the Heybeliada Talks were carefully selected to correspond with the areas that were being negotiated between the two community leaders at the official talks. This approach enabled the participants to be highly effective when taking action after they returned to their respective communities and reported to the circles they represent. While there was a certain conjunction in the composition of the groups of individual rounds, new experts were invited in accordance with the thematic subject fields and specific talking points. These dynamics provided for a profound depth of the discussions at the table.

From July 2008 until the publication of this book, GPoT Center organized nine rounds of the Heybeliada Talks. Even though it might be tempting to think that the idea to publish a book featuring main outcomes from the meetings is driven by the need to look back and evaluate because of the upcoming tenth round, which will act as a milestone, the opposite is true. Indeed, this book is being published with the intention to raise public awareness of the Cyprus problem in Cyprus, Turkey, the EU member states and elsewhere, to shed more light on some of the main outstanding issues in the Cyprus negotiations, and to offer a useful source of reference to political leaders, negotiating teams, governments and non-governmental figures involved in the search for a solution.

Through the Talks, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots were both able to learn about the positions and concerns of the “other side” in detail. The set-up of the Talks not only provided them with the opportunity to find the answers to the “what,” questions, but also to dig deeper into the “why’s.” Asking and finding answers to such questions is a *sine qua non* for increasing the prospects of reaching a viable consensus. GPoT Center believes that the series of informal meetings between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot civil society activists, academicians, opinion leaders, political experts and members of the negotiating teams significantly contributed to the improvement of mutual understanding between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, as well as between the two communities and Turkey and Greece. The talks strengthened the position of the individual participants by empowering them with a deep knowledge of the specific technical issues featured on the agenda of the official negotiations. Because of the unique composition of the groups, the discussions during the round-tables were very fruitful, thought-provoking and worthy of sharing with wider public. GPoT Center takes pride in the persistence and sustainability of the Heybeliada Talks, which went on for two years without any major interruptions.

While one may argue the nine rounds of the Heybeliada Talks did not bring about a substantial breakthrough on the level of official negotiations, the series was certainly not aimed to solve the Cyprus problem as such. This kind of outcome can be reached in the sphere of high politics only. Yet GPoT Center strongly believes that the series contributed to the overall strengthening of civil society's role in the latest peace endeavour, as well as to the realization of the UN goal of having talks that would be Cypriot-owned. Believing strongly in the efficiency of the Heybeliada meetings and the potential of second-track diplomacy to deliver a real breakthrough in the long term, GPoT Center will remain fully committed to its second-track diplomacy project on Cyprus.

Proceedings from the Round-Table Meetings

Domestic Politics in Cyprus: Facing the New Reality

Ever since the Greek Cypriot leader Dimitris Christofias and the Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat agreed to start the fully-fledged negotiations under the auspices of the UN in 2008, it has been repeatedly underlined that the latest initiative aimed at ending the division of the island must be Cypriot-owned and Cypriot-led.⁸ While the UN framework leaves certain space for the involvement of other actors, the individual roles of the two Cypriot communities and their respective leaders are perceived as key. Because of this, developments in domestic politics on each side of the divide have substantial influence on what happens at the negotiating table.

The speed of the negotiation process is affected, among other things, by the frequency of elections and the changes in political power brought by the vote-castings at all levels. Since the Cyprus talks started in 2008, there were parliamentary as well as presidential elections in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)⁹ and Greece, in the middle of 2011 parliamentary

⁸ During his visit to Cyprus in January 2010, the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated: "This process belongs to Cyprus. The United Nations is here at the invitation of both sides to assist. Your destiny is in your hands. You have taken responsibility for finding a solution. You are the ones driving the process and the ones who will benefit from the tremendous benefits and opportunities a settlement would bring to this island." (Ki-moon, B. (2010, January 31). *Secretary-General, Arriving in Cyprus to Show Support for Reunification Talks, Says 'I Am Confident That a Solution Is Possible and Within Reach'*. SG/SM/12729. New York: UN Department of Public Information.)

⁹ The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was proclaimed by Rauf Denktas in 1983, but the only state that has recognized it so far is Turkey. The UN Security Council in its resolution 541 (1983) called on the international community to refrain from recognizing any other Cypriot state than the RoC. The Greek Cypriot government of the RoC thus remains to be the only internationally recognized government in Cyprus despite the fact that the posts in the state administration reserved for the Turkish Cypriots as defined by Constitution of the RoC have been vacant since 1963. Turkey does recognize the RoC and in fact is one of the three guarantors of its very existence. What Turkey does not recognize is the Greek Cypriot government, that is seen by the international community as the representative of the Turkish Cypriots, too. However, the RoC does not have any effective jurisdiction north of the Green Line.

elections will be held in the Republic of Cyprus (RoC)¹⁰ and Turkey, and two years later presidential elections will be due in the RoC. This kind of structure makes it hard to push on the leaders to move forward. Bearing in mind that there is a serious time constraint and that no political leader is willing to make major concessions on sensitive issues shortly before elections out of the fear of losing votes, the participants of the Heybeliada Talks underlined that it will be of crucial importance to grasp the momentum right after the elections scheduled for 2011 are over. It was noticed that despite ad-hoc contacts that first occurred in 2009, there is still a major communication gap between the political parties from across the divide. Therefore, means aiming to make it possible for the political parties to communicate more regularly should be implemented.

Even though it is the presidents who engage in the talks directly, in order to act effectively, they need to be able to rely on a strong political backing from their respective communities. It was pointed out during the round-table meetings, that both leaders need support from parties, civil society and also international community to stand up against domestic opposition – mainly to face the resistance on political and public levels. After this year's elections in Turkey and the RoC are over, the leaders involved in the Cyprus talks, Mr. Christofias and Mr. Eroğlu, will have a two-year long election-free period until Greek Cypriots will be called to the ballot polls to choose their president. This time frame gives the leaders enough space to negotiate seriously in accordance with the Joint Statements of May 23 and July 1¹¹. Participants suggested that it would

¹⁰ The Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960 as a bi-communal state based on a power sharing principle between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. While the ratio of the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots was roughly 80 to 20, the system of checks and balances was employed on a 70:30 ratio. After President Makarios proposed constitutional amendments in 1963, inter-communal violence broke up and was followed by deployment of UN peacekeeping forces. The constitutional order has not been restored since then and the Turkish Cypriots have not been able to take up any posts in the governmental institutions since 1963, even though the RoC Constitution envisages their participation. In an aftermath of a Greek-led coup d'état in 1974, Turkey intervened militarily and since then has maintained around 36 per cent of the island. The ceasefire line still cuts the island into two parts and is referred to as Green Line. The Greek Cypriots see Turkey's intervention as the beginning of the conflict. However, from the perspective of the Turkish Cypriot the conflict started already in 1963.

¹¹ In the Joint Statements of May 23 and July 1, 2008, the two Cypriot leaders, i.e. Mr. Christofias and Mr. Talat, committed themselves to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as defined in relevant Security Council resolutions, composed of a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent State, and governed by a federal government with a single international personality.

be highly effective if both leaders took up political responsibly towards people and courageously faced criticism from the public for concessions that need to be made in order to find a compromise at the negotiating table.

Greek Cypriot Community

The Greek Cypriot presidential elections of 2008 marked a new beginning for the community and its political culture. After the votes were counted in the first and second rounds, it became clear that Mr. Christofias would replace the incumbent Tassos Papadopoulos.¹² It was the first time that a socialist party leader was elected by a rather conservative society. Provided only 40-42 percent of the Greek Cypriots ideologically align themselves with the center-left, it was argued that Mr. Christofias was elected president because of the general belief that he would be able to reconcile with his Turkish Cypriot counterpart and bring an end to Cyprus's division. His election is thus a direct consequence of people's call and desire for peace.

Concerns were raised that the President does not have much support from his political partners to push the negotiation process forward. He is also permanently being attacked by the opposition and the media, thus making it difficult for him to negotiate efficiently. Even though he had friendly relationship with the former Turkish Cypriot president Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat because of the leftist alignment of their parties, he is being criticized for any attempts at having a comparable relationship with Mr. Eroğlu. It was communicated by the participants of the round-table meetings that the Greek Cypriot community seems to be overlooking Mr. Eroğlu's committed engagement¹³ in the talks and

¹² The incumbent Tassos Papadopoulos from DIKO (Democratic Party) came third in the first round of the elections on April 17, 2008. Consequently Mr. Christofias from AKEL (Progressive Party of the Working People) beat the candidate of DISY (Democratic Rally), Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides, in the second round on April 24, 2008. The turnout was 46.63 percent in valid votes for Mr. Kasoulides and 53.37 percent in valid votes for Mr. Christofias.

¹³ Shortly after elections Mr. Eroğlu claimed the following: "Talks will continue because I want peace more than those who say that I don't" (Yackley, A. J., & Bahceli, Z. (2010, April 18). *Turkey Wants Cyprus Deal in 2010 After Eroğlu Win. Reuters.*) In a press conference after the tri-partite meeting held in January 2011 in Geneva, the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged the commitment of both leaders by stating the following: "Both sides have worked energetically to take the negotiations ahead. Despite Mr Eroğlu's heart surgery, the two leaders held four meetings." (Ki-moon, B. (2011, January 26). *Secretary-General's Press Remarks After his Meeting With the Leader of the Greek Cypriot Community and the Turkish Cypriot Community. United Nations Good Offices Mission.*)

expression of political goodwill. Rather, the Greek Cypriots still tend to see him through his earlier statements, which he made before he was elected president, and in which he openly expressed his favour for a two-state solution. The participants of the Heybeliada Talks underlined that even though the Turkish Cypriot community has a new leader, there is a substantial contingency in the negotiating team, as Mr. Eroğlu decided to keep some of the experts from Mr. Talat's group of specialists. Moreover, he has also been successfully trying to integrate various marginal groups into the process, thus making effective steps and decisions.

Turkish Cypriot Community

The current Turkish Cypriot team is negotiating under the leadership of Mr. Derviş Eroğlu, who replaced Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat, winning the last presidential elections held in April 2010.¹⁴ According to the interpretation by the participants of the Heybeliada Talks, the outcome from the ballot box was a direct consequence of the increasing disappointment within the Turkish Cypriot society. The dissatisfaction of the public with the pace of the talks over the last two years had led to the disappearance of the initial excitement over relaunch of the negotiations. Thus, when the presidential elections were due in Spring 2010, there was widespread pessimism among people who had serious doubts about whether the two leaders would be able to come up with a mutually agreeable peace dividend anytime soon.

Mr. Talat was elected president as a candidate of the Republican Turkish Party (CTP) in the presidential elections of 2005, i.e. the first ballot polls after the failed referenda on Annan Plan.¹⁵ He was elected into office with an almost

¹⁴ In the elections held on April 18, 2010, 50.35 percent of voters favored Mr. Eroğlu from the National Unity Party (UBP). The incumbent president and independent candidate Mr. Talat came second with 42.87 percent of the votes. For a comparison, the turnout was very different in the previous elections, held in 2005, when Mr. Talat replaced Rauf Denktaş. Back in 2005, Mr. Talat was elected into office with the support of 55.59 percent of the voters. His main rival Mr. Eroğlu came second with only 22.73 percent of the votes, lagging far behind.

¹⁵ The Annan Plan, or the so-called "Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem" drafted under the leadership of the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, envisaged unification of the island based on proposals and ideas put forward by the two Cypriot communities, as well as other international experts. The Plan also incorporated creative

33 percent lead over Mr. Eroğlu, who came second. There was general conviction that if elected President, the reconciliatory leader would be able to bring an end to the island's division. According to the analysis made by the participants of the Heybeliada Talks, the EU failed to cooperate with Mr. Talat and his party and did not manage to deliver on its promise¹⁶ to end the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. The implementation of the Direct Trade Regulation was still pending in 2009 when the parliamentary elections in the TRNC were due, as well as in 2010 when the presidential elections were held. Therefore, the National Unity Party (UBP) of Mr. Eroğlu was in an advantageous position when compared to that of Mr. Talat's party. One of the participants noted that it is always the party in power that has to pay off during elections with loss of voters' support. Thus, in the general elections of 2009, the UBP was able to gain the majority in the Parliament by winning 26 seats, while the CTP secured the right to be represented by 15 members of the Parliament. Regarding the

solutions which the UN had been proposing since it started to be involved in the search of the Cyprus settlement in 1970s. The Annan Plan was put into simultaneous referenda in both communities on April 24, 2004. Both the Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Papadopoulos and the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş openly voiced their strong opposition to the unification as envisaged in the Plan. Because of the rejection by the Greek Cypriots, the island could not be unified. The Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus lists the following concerns explaining the Greek Cypriots' incentive to vote against the Plan: "1) The removal of all foreign troops and settlers from Cyprus and the elimination of the right of foreign powers to unilaterally intervene in Cyprus; 2) Adequate guarantees to ensure that the commitments undertaken by the parties involved would be carried out; 3) A property recovery system that appropriately recognised the rights and interests of displaced Greek Cypriots who were forced from their homes in 1974, and a property compensation arrangement that did not require Greek Cypriots to fund their own restitution; 4) The right of all Cypriots to acquire property and to live wherever they chose without restrictive quotas; and 5) A functional government without deadlocks or voting restrictions based on ethnicity." (Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus. (2008). *Aspects of Cyprus. History: Latest Developments.*) Only a week after the failed referenda on May 1, 2004, the RoC entered the EU, but the *acquis communautaire* was suspended in the areas that are not under the effective control of the RoC.

¹⁶ In the aftermath of the referenda in 2004, the General Affairs Council of the EU declared the following: "The Council is determined to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community." (General Affairs Council. (2004, April 26). 2576th Council Meeting – General Affairs, C/04/115. Luxembourg.) As part of this commitment, the Commission proposed two instruments to be adopted as soon as possible, i.e. Green Line Regulation and Direct Trade Regulation, but the adoption of the later is still pending due to effective blocking by the Greek Cypriot government, that argues the Regulation needs to be passed unanimously.

support the parties enjoy, one of the Heybeliada invitees said the following: “As a consequence of the EU’s failure to deliver on its promises, around 15 percent of the Turkish Cypriots are reluctant to vote for CTP again.” The Turkish Cypriot community, even though disillusioned, still longs for a settlement and decided to try and reach to this goal with another leader. Therefore, it was concluded, the last elections, be it parliamentary or presidential, created a new political reality in both Cypriot communities.

Negotiation Process: Overcoming the Challenges Ahead

The Cyprus problem has a long history and the issue has kept the agenda of the UN busy for more than 45 years already. There have been numerous attempts to find a settlement acceptable for both sides. Yet there were as many failures as attempts. The very last failure in 2004 had a special taste of bitterness because the involvement of international actors like that of the EU was believed to help put pressure on the two parties and push them towards reconciliation. However, conditionality, the powerful tool that the EU has at its disposal for conducting accession talks with candidate countries, was not applied to the Cyprus case. Moreover, the Annan Plan, prepared under the auspices of the UN, was demonized by both community leaders and was portrayed negatively in the mass media, too. As a result of the votes cast, in which 76 percent of Greek Cypriots rejected the proposal approved by 65 percent of Turkish Cypriots, the island had to stay divided. The participants of the Heybeliada Talks emphasized that the sentiments of 2004, even though fading, are still alive and the shadows of the Annan Plan have not quite disappeared. Therefore, it is very important for the actors involved in the official negotiations to stop dealing with the “ghosts” of the past. Rather they should focus on the newly emerging reality.

It was pointed out that the current talks might be the very last attempt that could possibly deliver on the final solution of the Cyprus question as concerns were raised about the time factor. Also, the history of failures has a psychological effect on the public and diminishes general enthusiasm. Both communities are losing their hopes and excitement for “yet another round” of the peace talks. However, it was emphasized that there is still adequate support to keep the talks alive as people are willing to give the leaders the very last try. It was suggested

that it would be helpful to respect earlier consensus reached during various negotiations (e.g. the High Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979, Joint Statements of May 23 and July 1, 2008 etc.) because they provide solid common ground for further elaboration. However, at the same time it could be argued that the two leaders should look ahead and think in terms of the reality on the ground.

The invitees to the second-track diplomacy meetings concluded that the ongoing negotiations are not collaborative but strongly competitive. Both sides are tempted to position themselves and this kind of approach makes it difficult to reach a compromise. It was expressed that despite the public proclamations about commitment to work towards a settlement, a solution is not the primary goal of the leaders. Rather, they take part in the negotiation process for the sake of negotiating. Over the years, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots have both mastered the tactics necessary to manage the situation as needed. Both sides have learned how to engage in the talks and not produce anything. The reason for this behavior, as identified by the participants, is the very nature of the Cyprus problem. What once was a violent struggle has turned into a comfortable conflict. While on the one hand, comfortable conflicts prevent escalation of tensions, which is often the case in confronting conflicts, on the other hand, comfortable conflicts prevent productivity, which could be triggered by a minor crisis provided this crisis would be kept within certain limits. However, it was noted by one of the participants that the impression of a comfortable conflict and absence of violence is misleading. "There is peace, but there is no peace in the day-to-day live," he said.

The invitees underlined that even though the concerns and expectations of the two Cypriot communities are different, their interests are not mutually exclusive. The participants identified that security, be it physical, financial, professional or security of property rights, is the core issue for both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots. Therefore, it is possible to find common ground and the right balance with a bit of creative thinking within the strategy of "give and take". It was underlined that the solution of the Cyprus problem should be searched for within a certain framework outlined by the parameters of the UN resolutions and international law and not by the parameters of court decisions. While acting alongside the UN lines would not automatically lead to a solution of the problem as such, it would definitely help to keep an effective structure of the talks. The participants agreed that organization of an international conference could be useful, but in every case the phenomenon created by the media in

Bürgenstock,¹⁷ where the final stages of the Annan Plan were negotiated, should be avoided in order to avoid unnecessary fears from the “historic ghosts”. Therefore it is important to keep the negotiations behind closed doors.

Another challenge that needs to be overcome if a settlement is to be reached is the lack of trust between the leaders. The mutual lack of faith in sincere behavior constantly hinders developments in the talks since both sides are reluctant to put their confidence in the statements and promises declared by the other side. The suspicious behavior is stemming from the fact that both Mr. Christofias as well as Mr. Eroğlu are, as identified by one of the invitees, “the no-voters”.¹⁸ One of the participants voiced the following: “When one leader makes a positive gesture, he should be trusted by the other side, and also he himself should trust that his action of goodwill will be reciprocated.” Even though Turkey is involved in the negotiation process indirectly by consulting with the Turkish Cypriots, the general perception in the Greek Cypriot community is that Turkey is actually over-involved. The Turkish Cypriot participants acknowledged that

¹⁷ The conference in Bürgenstock was organized between March 27 and April 1, 2004 with the participation of the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, representatives from Greece, Turkey, the UN and the EU. The details about the high-level discussions of the final stages of drafting Cyprus’ unification plan, i.e. the Annan Plan V, got leaked to the press. The media then spread a rather negative image of the Annan Plan, which was put to simultaneous referenda on April 24, 2004. Former United Kingdom Special Envoy to Cyprus, Sir David Hanny, wrote the following about the Bürgenstock conference: “...the second phase ended in deadlock too, despite an attempt by Annan to get agreement on a package of amendments (Annan IV) to the earlier versions of the plan. Annan was therefore compelled to table his own definitive version of the plan (Annan V), which he duly did on the last day of the Bürgenstock talks, and it was this version that was submitted to the 24 April referendums. For all the allegations of both sides (naturally, in a contradictory sense), Annan V did not differ in any fundamental respect from the earlier versions of the plan. The territorial adjustments proposed in Annan III were not changed at all, nor were the basic structures of a bi-zonal, federated state. Some changes strengthened bi-zonality; provisions enabling property to be partially repossessed were included; token Turkish and Greek troops presences, even beyond accession to the EU (the number of troops being those in the 1960 Treaty of Alliance), were to be permitted. But if the itself was not greatly changed, the reactions were. The Turkish government and Talat embraced and supported Annan V as warmly and vociferously as Denktas, from afar, rejected it. Papadopoulos, while taking a few days before fully declaring his hand, soon moved to outright and emotional rejection. And the new Greek government wrung its hands on the sidelines, concentrating on limiting the damage to Greek-Turkish relations of any eventual rejection by the Greek Cypriots. (Hannay, D. (2005). *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution*. London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, pp. 243-244.)

¹⁸ The participant was referring to the two leaders’ position on the Annan Plan.

there is regular contact between the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot officials, but any kind of contact on different levels is missing, e.g. academic, civil society, etc. It was also noted that the Turkish Cypriots should be seen as equal partners to the Greek Cypriots and that they should not be looked at through the lenses of Turkey.

It was proposed that confidence-building measures (CBMs) would form an effective approach likely to take the talks ahead. However, often times, progress is being stopped out of fear that trust building gestures would indirectly lead to international recognition of the TRNC. It was underlined during many of the Heybeliada Talks that the fear of “recognition by implication” is a serious concern for the Greek Cypriot community. It was communicated that there is a sense of unease about starting using the same country code for the whole of the island by connecting mobile lines, participation of the Turkish Cypriot schools in the Bologna Process or implementation of the Direct Trade Regulation, because the Greek Cypriots think any of this actions could lead to international recognition of the TRNC. One of the Turkish Cypriot participants noted that these fears are unrealistic and especially in the case of the Direct Trade Regulation, the EU made it explicitly clear that adoption of the Regulation could never lead to recognition of the TRNC. It was further argued that recognition of states is a legal issue.¹⁹ It was emphasized by the Greek Cypriot participants that the impression that the goal of the Turkish Cypriots is to get recognition of the TRNC should be overcome. Regarding the CBMs, it was agreed that goodwill gestures aimed at building of trust between the two communities not only opens paths for more communication across the divide, but also improves on the general atmosphere because of the impression that “something is moving” and thus prospects of a settlement seem to be closer. However, it was argued that the Cyprus problem as such would never be solved via CBMs only. It was noted that the CBMs are implemented by leaders, not the working groups or technical committees, as

¹⁹ For further reading see Brus, M., Akgün, M., Blockmans, S., Tiriyaki, S., Van Den Hoogen, T., & Douma, W. (2008). *A Promise to Keep: Time to End the International Isolation of the Turkish Cypriots*. Istanbul: TESEV Publications, p. 19: “State recognition is a complicated legal concept. It can take many forms and can have many purposes, both domestic and international. Recognition of a state is used in a ‘declaratory’ manner to express one state’s acceptance of the coming into being of a new state and its willingness to enter into official relations with that state, but it may also at times be considered as a constitutive element in the creation of a new state. [...] in general, states enjoy wide discretion to recognize or to not recognize a new entity that claims to be a state.”

a result of which the CBMs consume substantial part of the leaders' time, e.g. opening of a crossing can take up to 2.5 years. Therefore, while it could be argued that goodwill gestures are important, it should be imperative that the two leaders do not let their energy be consumed by the CBMs only, as their leadership is needed in the negotiation process, too. It was proposed that an adequate balance should be found between the two activities. Remarks were made that implementation of CBMs can sometimes be counterproductive, e.g. while it is good to open crossings and secure possibilities for contact between the two communities, it was stated that when the Greek Cypriots crossed first to the other side in 2003, once they saw the damage done to the houses and other public buildings, they had mixed feelings and returned to South rather unhappy. Therefore, the CBMs should be implemented very carefully in order to avoid contra productivity.

The Role of International Players: The UN and the EU in Need of a Visionary Strategy

Since the very early phases of the inter-communal struggle in Cyprus, the UN has been actively involved in the search of a settlement. It has been facilitating talks between the two parties via personal involvement of the UN Secretary Generals, who have taken up the role of mediators. Some of them have even gone beyond that and together with their Special Advisers openly stepped in the process of drafting of peace proposals by putting forward formulas and ideas that could be accepted by both Cypriot sides. Alongside the Secretary General's mission of good offices in Cyprus, the UN has been involved on other levels, too. For example, the Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), which was first deployed in 1964, has become one of the longest running UN missions in the world. The participants of the Heybeliada Talks noticed that while the UNFICYP and UN Secretary General are still active in Cyprus, the role of the organization as such has been changing over years. Back in 2004 and before that, the UN was able to put forward proposals, actively mediate and arbitrate between the parties and play a constructive role. However, this is not the case today. The UN has been facing difficulties when it asks the parties to accept its ideas and thus its role has transformed from that of a mediator to an observer. It was voiced that the

level of UN's involvement also depends on the personal skills and engagement of the individual Secretary Generals, some of whom have had more experience and deeper expertise on conflict settlement.

It was observed that the UN has been lately trying to step into the process and play a more active role by organizing two tripartite meetings²⁰ between the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the two Cypriot leaders. While the participants of the Heybeliada Talks acknowledged that this method is likely to have a positive impact on the speed and productivity of the negotiation process, there was general disappointment over the depth of UN's involvement because neither the UN nor the Secretary General had explicitly confirmed that they would take up a specific role. Concerns were expressed over the absence of guidance on the side of the UN as there is no strategy about how to take the talks ahead. Moreover, the Turkish Cypriot participants of the Heybeliada rounds expressed their disappointment over UN's sincerity. It was stated that the Turkish Cypriot negotiating team had prepared a detailed proposal on the property issue, but this initiative did not get any credit in the latest Secretary General's report on his good offices,²¹ thus sending signals that the individual pro-solution actions of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot parties are not treated equally.

With respect to the role of the EU, the participants expressed concerns about the lack of a grand strategy from Brussels. One of the invitees to the round-table stated: "After 2004 there have been no calls to solve [from the side of the EU] the Cyprus problem as if the problem had been already solved." It was noticed that after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the Direct Trade Regulation got into the European Parliament in winter 2010, but the institution neither took the special opportunity to adopt the Regulation nor to put the Cyprus issue back on EU's agenda and discuss it in detail. It was underlined that the EU should adopt a clear policy on Cyprus as soon as possible (definitely before the RoC

²⁰ The Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon called for a tripartite meeting and met with the Greek Cypriot President Mr. Demetris Christofias and the Turkish Cypriot President Mr. Derviş Eroğlu in New York on November 18, 2010 "to restore momentum to the process". In a press conference after the meeting he called on the two leaders to take the negotiations ahead: "The people of Cyprus and the international community want a solution, not endless talks." (Ki-moon, B. (2010, November 18). *Secretary-General's Press Encounter After Meeting with Cypriot Leaders*. United Nations Good Offices Mission.) A follow-up tripartite meeting was organized on January 26, 2011 in Geneva.

²¹ See United Nations Secretary General. (2010, November 24). *Report of the Secretary-General on his Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus*. S/2010/603.

takes on the rotating presidency in 2012) because this deficit creates space for politicians from the individual member states to hinder the negotiation process with counterproductive statements. A reference was made to the speech of the German Chancellor Ms. Angela Merkel²² in Cyprus in January 2011 to point out how some European leaders also use the Cyprus problem as a pretext to halt Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU.

It was acknowledged that Ankara's application for membership in the EU forms an important dimension of the Cyprus negotiation process. However, the general conclusion was that the EU does not have as much leverage as it used to a couple of years ago, because the accession talks with Turkey have been stalled and the prospects of a full membership are rather blurred as 17 out of 35 chapters are currently being blocked, thus making it impossible for the process to move forward.²³ The participants concluded that while Greek Cypriots often refer to the non-discriminatory implementation of the Ankara Protocol in order to unlock the Cypriot negotiation process, this is not necessarily the case.

While enactment of the Protocol in combination with the enactment of the Direct Trade Regulation is likely to bring a major breakthrough and take the Cyprus talks ahead, the Ankara Protocol is not key to the Cyprus settlement as it primarily relates to EU-Turkey relations. It was noted by the Turkish Cypriot participants that if the RoC enabled adoption of the Direct Trade Regulation, the Greek Cypriots would have a tremendous impact on the EU-Turkey relations as this step would reciprocally lead to Ankara's opening of ports and airports to the RoC vessels and aircrafts and thus consequently to the unfreezing of the 8 blocked chapters. Thus, such a move by the Greek Cypriots would be of great symbolic as well as practical value. As a response to the suggestion by the

²² At a press conference in the Presidential Palace, Angela Merkel stated the following during her first official visit to the RoC in January 2011: "We greatly appreciate your courage, creativity shown and initiative taken to solve the problem. We see that you are taking many steps and we also see that the Turkish side is not responding adequately to your steps." (Evripidou, S. (2011, January 12). Merkel Gives Full Support to President. *Cyprus Mail*.)

²³ 8 chapters were blocked by the Council of the EU in December 2006 because Turkey refused to open its ports and airports to the vessels and aircrafts flying a flag of the RoC, i.e. provision under the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement, which requires Turkey to extend its Customs Union to all EU member states, thus to the RoC, too. Turkey is not willing to comply with the Protocol unless EU lifts the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community by enabling for a direct trade as promised in 2004. The rest of the chapters are unilaterally blocked by either the RoC or France.

Turkish Cypriot participants of the Heybeliada Talks, the Greek Cypriots noted that there is general fear in the Greek Cypriot community that enabling of direct trade would lead to the recognition of the TRNC.

The participants acknowledged the EU's constructive position with respect to *acquis communautaire*, as the EU proclaimed it is willing to accommodate any solution the two Cypriot leaders agree on. The flexibility of the EU's community law provide for implementation of this promise and thus the *acquis* does not create any obstacles whatsoever for the talks. The participants also welcomed the appointment of a special representative of the EU for Cyprus,²⁴ a move that could possibly lead to EU's more active role on the island. It was concluded that the EU should be more visible, especially in the North where there is a need for substantive projects, but the EU only performs training activities. This approach could help to win back the hearts and minds of the Turkish Cypriots, who do not trust the EU anymore because of the pending promise to end their economic isolation, which was supposed to be a reward for their courage in supporting the Annan Plan. Yet almost 7 years after RoC entered the EU, the Turkish Cypriots still live without the possibility to enjoy the four freedoms, i.e. free movement of goods, capital, services and people, and other benefits of the island's membership. The EU lost its credibility in the eyes of the Turkish Cypriots, but steps should be made to gain it back as 15 to 20 percent of the Turkish Cypriots are still in favor of EU accession. If it acts constructively, the EU's involvement in the peace process could create enthusiasm towards unification on both sides of the island as it was back in 2004.

All in all, the participants acknowledged that intervention of outsiders is not a desired approach, but is necessary for the delivery of a timely solution. The involvement of international actors such as the UN and the EU could push the talks further as these players are able to create enthusiasm among people. However, their involvement will not be constructive unless they adopt a clear and feasible strategy on Cyprus.

²⁴ In 2009 President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso appointed Leopold Maurer as his personal representative to the UN Good Offices Mission in Cyprus. Mr. Maurer's role is to provide advice to the UN on EU-related matters.

Public Opinion: Towards an Informed Citizenry

Public opinion plays a crucial role in the search of a viable settlement of the Cyprus problem. Not only does it impact the pace of the day-to-day talks as reactions of masses make it challenging for the two leaders to compromise, it is also important to keep in mind that people will be the principal determinants of the destiny of any political agreement. The Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots alike will be invited to simultaneous ballot polls to have a final say on the future of the island, but the negative atmosphere created by the failed referenda on the Annan Plan seven years ago has not completely disappeared in either community. It is against this background that the Heybeliada Group concluded that the issue of public opinion should be taken seriously in order to prevent a scenario similar to that of April 2004.

Concerns were raised about the diminishing public support of the negotiation process and the lack of interest in general. It was emphasized that people on both sides of the divide still long for a solution but the number of those who believe that achievement of such a goal is possible is fast shrinking.²⁵ The situation is very serious as never before has there been such disengagement and revulsion on the part of the people. Even though various leaders in the past might have had managed to convince masses not to support negotiated solutions, both societies still used to follow the process very closely. The source of the current disillusionment and ambiguity is among other things caused by the long history of unsuccessful attempts to end the island's division. The excitement from 2008 when the talks restarted should be brought back. This is a difficult task, provided a solution of the problem is conditioned by concessions on both sides, however it was noted that a compromise is very unlikely to create much enthusiasm among people.

²⁵ "Large majorities (68 percent of Greek Cypriots, 65 percent of Turkish Cypriots) wish that the negotiations will lead to a settlement. Only a minority (14 percent of Greek Cypriots, 21 percent of Turkish Cypriots) prefers that nothing comes of the process. Against this, equally large majorities do not believe the negotiations will lead to results (65 percent of Greek Cypriots, 69 percent of Turkish Cypriots)." (Sözen, A., Christou, S., Lordos, A., & Kaymak, E. (2010). *Cyprus 2015: Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future*. Nicosia: Joint Programme Unit for United Nations / Interpeace Initiatives (JPU). Retrieved from http://www.cyprus2015.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75%3Afederation-remains-only-negotiated-settlement-but-public-skepticism-and-mistrust-remain-a-challenge&catid=3%3Alatest-news&Itemid=57&lang=en, February 11, 2011.

When analyzing the current mood and feeling on the island, the participants concluded that if a referendum was held today, the two communities would be driven to vote against the proposed solution for different reasons. There is an urgent need to identify particular motives that might lead people into saying “no” and study them in a detail. This kind of research would enable to approach people in a relevant way, and to sensitively target elimination of specific concerns they may have. While specific worries and doubts of people need yet to be researched, it was concluded that there is a general fear that any solution will bring major, unbearable changes to people’s lives.²⁶ Because of this, many people choose to prefer the continuation of the so-called “comfortable conflict” over a final solution as they think that the status quo would be more beneficial for them personally in the long term. It is in this context that some Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike see the lack of progress in the negotiation process as an achievement. However, the participants of the Heybeliada Talks underlined that even though the conflict is not violent anymore, lasting peace in day-to-day life is still missing. Serious concerns were expressed about growing nationalism on both sides and lauder calls for partition by extremist groups especially. It was articulated that security, be it physical security, professional security, property security, financial security or other, is the major drive for people to support the talks on both sides.

The general conclusion of the sessions focusing on the issues related to public opinion has been that it would be helpful to implement a strategy that would target the formation of people’s standpoints and views and bringing back public enthusiasm and support for the talks. It was proposed that trends within both Cypriot societies should be monitored via independent advisors, who would report to a special working group. The working group would then act as a link between the public and the leaders. Such an approach would be likely to encourage people to express consent with the negotiated solution because they would be able to express their concerns, consult and hear feedback. It was conveyed that the civil society and academia should take a joint lead in this endeavour. It was however noted that there is a lack of contact between the civil society organizations and academicians from across the divide.

²⁶ Some families in Cyprus had to resettle as much as three times in the last few decades because of the inter-communal struggles in 1958, 1960-1963 and 1974. While on the one hand both the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots want to secure their right to choose whether to move back to homes they had to abandon in the late 50s, early 60s or mid-70s, at the same time they are also reluctant to resettle and start a whole new life for the fourth time already.

The Heybeliada Group suggested that implementation of the following steps would be helpful towards a strategy aiming at delivering people's support of the talks and acknowledgement of the final solution:

1) Fighting misinformation

It was pointed out that there is a lot of misinformation among people regarding what is going on at the negotiating table. This relates especially to facts and data in proposals that could potentially affect people's lives if approved by both leaders, e.g. proposals on property, economy or governance. This often triggers inappropriate public reactions based on fallacious pretext. It was noted that there is a deficit in knowledge of major concepts, too – e.g. people are not aware of what federal government means and what such a form of administration implies (though there are possibilities for various forms of federation and there has so far been no consensus between the two leaders on how loose or how tight the federal solution should be). Mass media by bringing up these issues every day only fuel the resistant thinking and firm positions among people. Consequently, leaders find themselves in a position where it is difficult to make major concessions at the negotiating table. It was therefore proposed that implementation of campaigns aimed at informed citizenry would be helpful.

2) Keeping the public debate within certain borders

With respect to informed citizenry, the participants of the round tables underlined that there is a need for a right balance between information sharing versus knowledge building. While on one hand it may be useful not to provide detailed information about the latest developments in the talks to people in order to avoid massive reactions that could possibly hinder the process, on the other hand it is key that the public has the possibility to access freely correct and precise facts about particular issues of their interest. It was mentioned that even though the leaders agreed to conduct the talks behind closed doors, the proceedings from the negotiations are often leaked and thus discussed in media on daily bases. The participants agreed that there is a need for responsible journalism as well as responsible negotiating.

3) Overcoming mistrust through cross-community dialogue

The island of Cyprus has a turbulent history and the fears stemming from the personal experiences of the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots in the violent past take up much more space than one would expect. People, as well as leaders, are generally tempted to mistrust the other side and look at every gesture of goodwill with cardinal suspicions. It was proposed that the most appropriate approach to build confidence between the two societies would be grassroots cross-community dialogue, particularly women's involvement and participation of the younger generation, which has not developed strong nationalistic and/or ethnic views.

4) Pursuing constructive public statements and leadership

The participants concluded that it would be useful if the leaders avoided public statements that point to definite deadlines by which the Cyprus question shall be solved. Such proclamations are not constructive because they firstly raise the hopes of people, and secondly deepen the overall disappointment and frustration once they are not met. Rather, the public communiqués should be encouraging, soft and precise. Remarks were made that it would be helpful if Mr. Christofias and Mr. Eroğlu took up a stronger lead in driving people to accept the solution.

Media and the Negotiation Process: Towards Responsible Journalism

The participants expressed concerns about the strong influence of media that often choose to portray the talks in rather negative ways. The articles in newspapers and programs broadcasted on radio and TV give the impression that there are no prospects for the talks to end and these messages consequently contribute to the spreading and intensification of the public disappointment. Marred trust in the ability of the two leaders to deliver a solution leads to widespread ambiguity and diminishes people's interest in and support for the negotiation process. The media has a lot of power in terms of agenda-setting and shaping of public opinion. It was noted that the official talks are often leaked to

the press and this does not help with keeping the momentum of the process, as leaders agree to negotiate behind closed doors with the aim of not spurring unnecessary reactions on the side of the people.

The participants offered their opinion that unlike in the earlier rounds of the peace talks, currently people are informed more, or rather the channels of access to information are more open. However, the quality and accuracy of messages that get through are disputed. The media still remains the main source of reference, hence the serious need for responsible journalism. It was noted that media played a major role in demonizing the Annan Plan and the final stages of its drafting in Bürgenstock. The same trends can be observed in the current process, e.g. description of the tripartite meeting between the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the two Cypriot leaders in Geneva in January 2011 was rather disturbing. It was communicated that as a consequence of the messages in the news, no one expected a major breakthrough from Geneva. Moreover, there was a common perception that the Secretary General is an enemy of the solution.

The participants of the round table meetings concluded that news about the Cyprus issue are absent from the Greek media. However, the general evaluation was that this kind of situation is constructive because too much of public debating could possibly hinder the process. It was communicated that it would be useful to hold a meeting with Turkish journalists and give them the opportunity to learn about the realities of Cyprus issue through interaction with the Heybeliada participants. It was noted that there is a communication crisis between Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots at the grassroots level and that this creates a lot of misunderstanding.

Bearing in mind the significance of the role media plays in the negotiation process, GPoT Center decided to dedicate one of the Heybeliada rounds to the journalists from both sides of the island. While the Heybeliada series was designed with the aim to support the official negotiations via public diplomacy between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, GPoT Center also aspired to create a link between the participants from the island and high-level officials. The 6th round of the Talks was thus unique in two directions. During the earlier rounds, the participants expressed that there is a high level of mistrust on the side of the Greek Cypriots towards Turkey and intentions of Ankara and the country's engagement in the search for a solution to the Cyprus problem.

Believing in the power of dialogue, the GPoT Center invited the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot journalists to Istanbul to meet directly with the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Turkish Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış to discuss issues related to the official talks and also concerns of the Greek Cypriot community especially. It was for the first time since the beginning of the Cyprus problem that a Turkish Prime Minister spoke directly to Greek Cypriots. The event was mediatized in both parts of the island and the messages, which were transmitted to people, had a considerable impact on the perceptions of the Greek Cypriots towards Turkey's sincerity and Ankara's support of the negotiation process. The event thus contributed to the confidence-building between the Greek Cypriots and Turkey, especially. Some of the articles covering the historical event in both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot newspapers and providing more detailed information about what was said and discussed during the two individual meetings with the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Turkish Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış, can be found in the chapter entitled "Press Scan: Heybeliada Talks in the Media".

Civil Society: Grassroots Activism Aiming to Bridge the Divide

Civil society activists formed the substantial portion of the spectrum of participants of the Heybeliada Talks, thus making it possible to discuss the responsibilities of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot civil societies and indicate what particular place they should take up in the whole process. It was articulated that while there is a certain amount of communication on the level of high politics, there is a serious deficit of direct contact between the two communities on intellectual and grassroots levels. Concerns were expressed about the fact that interaction between the two communities is actually becoming more rare and random than in the past. One of the invitees made a remark that while the number of NGOs in Cyprus is relatively high, i.e. around 150, in reality there are only 20 to 30 civil society activists, who have some kind of actual impact on wider communities.

The Greek Cypriot participants communicated that deeper knowledge about Turkey is missing in their community, as well as a general awareness about

activities of the Turkish civil society regarding the Cyprus issue. Concerns about the lack of contact with Turkish NGOs were also voiced by the Turkish Cypriot participants. In addition, hope was expressed about the possibility to establish contact with Turkish politicians via Heybeliada Talks in the future.

It was proposed that it would be helpful if the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot civil societies took up a more vigorous role in establishing contact with leaders in Cyprus as well as in Greece and Turkey. It was noted that the civil society and other pro-solution forces should be actively involved in the negotiation process. Collaboration between the NGOs from across the divide should be encouraged in order to express support to the two leaders. Once the bridges are built on the grassroots level, the leaders will be likely to feel more open and free to cooperate with the other side. The participants also suggested that it would be helpful to create a Cross-communal Task Force composed of academicians and social scientists, who would work together and back the leaders.

Property Issue: Getting out of the Technical Deadlock

The Cyprus problem has many aspects as well as levels, and the question of property constitutes one of the most central issues that need to be solved if there is to be a final settlement. While it might be possible to argue that up to a certain degree, the struggles in Cyprus were motivated by territorial interests, the conflict as such did not start with disputes over property. Property issue is thus a derivative of the past political hassle, but despite it being a bi-product, the question of land and real estate keeps the leaders busy at the negotiating table. What makes the issue so central is the direct connection between property and civilians. Property is also closely related to finances and accumulation of capital, and even more importantly, homes and houses are associated with family ties, social networks and other emotional and psychological aspects of the conflict. The issue is also complicated by the disproportionality in claims on property on the two sides. Greek Cypriot property in the North amounts to roughly 1.500.000 donums, whereas Turkish Cypriot property in the South to one third of it, i.e. 500.000 donums. As a consequence of this, the Turkish Cypriots will have to concede more. The participants concluded that a settlement that would allow

for the Turkish Cypriots to remain in the North where they have vested interest and for the Greek Cypriots to be compensated for property they cannot get back is likely to satisfy people on material side.

It was noted that the opinion of the Turkish Cypriot community on property is rather mixed and fluctuating in the middle of the scale, whereas the opinion of the Greek Cypriots is much more homogenous and predictable as they tend to take sides at one or the other end of the spectrum. Distinction was made between the perceptions of the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots of the past. The memories of the Greek Cypriots are overwhelmingly positive, as they tend to romanticize the past and their lives before 1974. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriots, who were displaced not only in 1974, but also in 1963, tend to romanticize their pre-1974 lives much less. Moreover, they seem to have no refugee associations, unlike the Greek Cypriots, which contributes to the absence of the institutionalization of memory. It is against this background that the Greek Cypriots emphasize the importance of having the “first right of refusal”, i.e. the right of the current owner to decide whether s/he wants to give up her/his property. The participants pointed out that most likely a committee will be responsible for determining who will have the first right on property – whether the current user or the original owner.

It was uttered that even though Greek Cypriots demand the right of return to the houses they abandoned in the North, at the same time they are unwilling to reside in areas to be administered by the Turkish Cypriot Constituent State as the resettlement would imply the need to learn Turkish and live among “the other” group. It was also noted that many of the Greek Cypriots realized they would not be able to go back to what they left behind in 1974, when the checkpoints were first opened. They went to the North only to see that they cannot go back in time as some of the properties were damaged and ruined. It was communicated that the willingness to return and live under the Turkish Cypriot administration rises in direct correlation with age, i.e. the older generation is more willing to return, and willingness depends on whether others from the Greek Cypriot community are going to return and whether it will be possible to live close to other Greek Cypriots or local police forces. On the other hand, very few Turkish Cypriots are expected to return to the South and live under the Greek Cypriot administration. Most of them favor an exchange of properties instead.

It was communicated that some of the questions related to the chapter of property are misinterpreted in the public because of false information; an example of this is the doubled or tripled figures that people expect to get in compensations. It was underlined that it is important to agree on a clear concept of values and categories that would respect people's emotional attachment to properties, too. It was mentioned that homes are likely to be treated differently, i.e. more favorably than the general property. The participants mentioned that the ruling on the Demopolous Case²⁷ introduced a major change in the property issue as a revision of the property definition and criteria, on which property should be reinstated, exchanged or compensated were made after adoption of the ruling. The current value of the Turkish Cypriot property in the South is relatively low because the guardians did not choose to invest in the houses and develop them. On the contrary, the Greek Cypriot properties in the North have gained value. In case people will not be able to get their properties back, it was suggested that compensation should reflect the current values. It was noted that people are likely to try to make their property more valuable once the concept of value is agreed upon and made public.²⁸

The participants concluded that philosophical understanding between the two leaders is a *sine qua non* for achieving progress on the property chapter. Participants expressed hope that once there is a philosophical understanding on the matter, the specific numbers of the agreed values can go up and down according to the needs of and acceptance by both communities as the chapter of property is rather technical. It was pointed out that while the Turkish Cypriot side tends to be more legalistic, the Greek Cypriots are more political. However, both sides acknowledged that the property issue is a political matter and that is why implementation of a UN approach would be useful. Hopes were expressed that the new initiative by the UN, i.e. appointment of a property expert to assist the two sides to come up with a feasible proposal, would help greatly in finding of an acceptable compromise.

²⁷ The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled on March 1, 2010 in the Demopolous and Others v. Turkey Case, that the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) established in the TRNC in 2006 was an effective domestic remedy for the Greek Cypriot properties. However, according to the decision of the ECtHR, the Greek Cypriots seeking remedies do not necessarily have to apply to the IPC, and can choose to wait for a political solution of the Cyprus problem.

²⁸ For example, during the period of the Annan Plan, people started building second floors on their ground level houses because the property would gain financial value. With such a move it was possible to increase the value of property by up to 50-60 percent.

The participants also discussed the “journey” of the property chapter. While Mr. Talat was still representing the Turkish Cypriot community, the chapter was linked to the chapter on economy on the premise that the two issues are related. Later on, proposals were made to link the property chapter with that of governance. Then, Mr. Christofias suggested to link the chapter with territory and also to include the question of citizenship in it. Turkish Cypriots replied that if the chapter of territory is brought up, the question of guarantors need to be incorporated, as well. After an exchange of ideas between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, a report was produced. The document allowed for linkage between the territory chapter and the chapter of property. Moreover, it was agreed that all chapters could be negotiated on at the same time. This approach is believed to allow the two leaders to move ahead with negotiations on various other issues if there is a major deadlock on a particular question.

The participants also discussed the concept of urban transformation. The idea does not refer to moving or resettling to urban centers, but to the development of infrastructure in areas on land, whose value has decreased due to various reasons, e.g. towns in decay, shantytowns, “ghettos” etc. Most of this kind of property is in the buffer zone with up to 50-70 villages in ruins. In the Paphos Mountains, there are some Greek Cypriot villages with no infrastructure whatsoever. Because of this, the inhabitants have moved to Paphos and Limassol areas. If infrastructure is built it will not only affect the Greek Cypriot villages but also all other villages in the area. This concept of urban transformation could thus serve to boost the economy, encourage life in the countryside and increase the standard of living in both communities.

Governance and the Concept of Federation

A substantial portion of the discussions around the table was set aside for the question of governance, power distribution and issues related to administration of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot federation, i.e. questions that lie at the very heart of the functionality and sustainability of the new state. It was articulated that while there is general agreement that the talks are aiming for a bi-zonal and bi-communal solution to be materialized in a federal establishment, there are striking differences between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot

definitions of a federation. While the former are striving for more authority to be given to the central government, the latter aim at diffusion of power and a stronger position for the individual constituent states. It was agreed that once a solution is reached, Cyprus should have single voice in the EU and this could be achieved through establishment of a Ministry for European Union Affairs. The Turkish Cypriot participants mentioned that meanwhile, if 2 out of 6 seats in the European Parliament were given to Turkish Cypriots, it would be a great goodwill gesture that would serve to build trust between the two communities.

It was uttered that the Greek Cypriot community does not see federation as a just solution and finds it very difficult to accept the idea of partnership with the Turkish Cypriots in order to jointly administer the island with them. The feeling that federation is an unbalanced solution is keeping Mr. Christofias from delivering at the negotiating table because of the objection of the public. However, the participants underlined that people's opposition to the idea of federation partially stems from misinformation and lack of knowledge, as it was not communicated properly to the public that the desired final outcome is not a confederation, as believed by many Greek Cypriots.

It was agreed that political equality between the two constituent states would be of crucial importance. The notion of political equality however should not be interpreted in terms of numbers but in terms of effective participation in the whole governing system. The Greek Cypriot invitees expressed that there is a perpetual fear within their community that the Turkish Cypriots, once given certain powers, would run away and make schism. It was repeatedly stated during the meetings that unless the two communities start trusting each other, a solution will be unlikely. Cooperation and unity are preconditions of functionality of the federal system. It was expressed that the Greek Cypriot community does not trust that Turkey is interested in a solution. There is a general impression that Turkey is playing a communication game. Concerns were voiced about whether Turkey will allow the Turkish Cypriots to implement the agreed solution. It was proposed that more meetings of the kind of the 6th round of the Heybeliada Talks would help with trust and confidence-building between all interested parties. It was also underlined that when it comes to guarantees, the Turkish Cypriot society is never as uncompromising as their leadership.

The participants agreed that the number of Turkish settlers,²⁹ who will be allowed to become citizens of the new state, will have to be limited. There is a fear that as time passes more and more Turkish citizens will become TRNC citizens, which will affect the demographic balance. It was pointed out that the two leaders have approved that those who already have TRNC citizenship will not have to leave Cyprus and go back to Turkey. The rest will however be agreed on later by the joint Cypriot government.

Economy and the Benefit of the Peace Dividend

The participants of the Heybeliada Talks concluded that people on both sides of the divide are worried about the economic situation, as too many economic questions are directly bound to the final settlement. The lack of contact between the two communities creates economic hardship and also indirectly reinforces the growth of social problems. Moreover, while the Greek Cypriot community is better off, it was underlined that the economic situation in either part of the island is not permanent and may change anytime soon, especially as the international economic crisis continues. It was emphasized that there are no economic benefits and no money to be made in the partition; in contrast, a comprehensive solution and cooperation between all interested countries would bring profit to the whole region.

²⁹ The immigrants from the mainland Turkey, who settled down in northern Cyprus are often referred to as the Turkish settlers. "The Turkish immigrants constitute a heterogeneous population, with varying degrees of attachment to the island and integration into the Turkish-Cypriot community. Many left Turkey when they were very young; others were born on the island. The long duration of their presence on the island means that many today have only weak links with Turkey and tend to identify themselves as Turkish Cypriots." (Hatay, M. (2005). *Beyond Numbers: An Inquiry into the Political Integration of the Turkish 'Settlers' in Northern Cyprus*. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Center, p. 1.) The issue of Turkish settlers relates to fears of demographic changes in the North and also to acquisition of political rights and in particular to the acquisition of the right to vote. Greek Cypriots see this as a major concern because people will be called to decide about the future of the negotiated agreement in a referendum. While the number of settlers as defined by the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot sources differ, according to a research carried out in 2005 and based on the electoral list of the TRNC in 2003, the following was concluded: "This indicated that the total number of voters born in Turkey stood at 23,315." (Ibid. p. 3.) Thus the ratio of the Turkish voters is around 20-25 percent of the population entitled to vote.

It was pointed out that there is artificial wealth in the TRNC created by subsidies from Turkey and that a real and healthy economy is missing. The economic dependency is becoming very unpopular and the tensions between Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots are rising. Moreover, the fact that most of the Turkish Cypriots work for the state could create a major obstacle in transforming the country into a liberal economy. It was voiced that the Turkish Cypriots would like to have more independence in financial matters, but are unable to stand on their own because of the existing isolation. Implementation of the Direct Trade Regulation as promised in 2004 would diminish the dependency of the Turkish Cypriots on the subsidies from Turkey.

It was also mentioned that in some respect, the Turkish Cypriots now have a special status in the RoC when compared to the Greek Cypriots. An example of free access to hospitals in the South has been offered. This kind of positive discrimination is a consequence of the non-recognition of the Turkish Cypriot documents by the Greek Cypriot authorities. As a consequence, Greek Cypriot hospitals do not ask for salary slips from the Turkish Cypriots and this kind of treatment triggers angry reactions within the Greek Cypriot community. All in all, it was summarized that the Turkish Cypriots are in many aspects pushed to rely on either Turkey or the Greek Cypriots. The participants of the Heybeliada Talks expressed that it would be helpful to put an end to the special relationship and special status of Turkish Cypriots and to allow them to stand equally next to Greek Cypriots. It was suggested that direct trade would create a strong interdependency between the two communities and positively support development of a healthy relationship.

It was further argued that the Direct Trade Regulation would not only be a powerful CMB, it would also link the Turkish Cypriots with the EU more boldly and keep them on the pro-European path; thus, the adoption of the Regulation would likely have the potential to bring back the trust Turkish Cypriots had in the EU in 2004. That any EU citizen can go across the Green Line, but commodities cannot was noted by the participants as great anomaly that should be tackled. With the help of direct trade, Turkish Cypriots would be able to attract foreign investment. Moreover, Greek Cypriots, by voting in favour of the Regulation, would be seen as the ones opening the gates for Turkey's accession to the EU. Turkey earlier proclaimed that it is willing to comply with the provisions of the Ankara Protocol if direct trade is enabled. Thus, implementation of the Direct Trade Regulation and of the Ankara Protocol could be made reciprocally.

However, it was noticed that the Greek Cypriots see the opening of ports and airports to RoC flagged-vessels as Ankara's obligation, and thus are unwilling to exchange it for direct trade. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriots see the Direct Trade Regulation as an obligation of the EU. A suggestion was made by one of the Greek Cypriot participants that Varosha³⁰ could be possibly exchanged for the Direct Trade Regulation. The response of the Turkish Cypriot participants was that the Turkish Cypriot negotiating team would never accept this proposal because of the official stance that the question of Varosha should be part of the comprehensive solution.

It was communicated that some of the steps of the Greek Cypriot community which are done out of the fear of recognition by implication pushes the Turkish Cypriots to move behind the edge. As one participant put it: "When people are not allowed to play in the white zone, they move to the grey and black zones." A reference was made to the developments in the past years, e.g. once the export of textile, fruits and vegetables was stopped, the Turkish Cypriot economy went another direction – trees were pulled down and houses, casinos, and universities were built in their place. It was underlined that these "creative" solutions have an unwanted snowball effect leading to numerous anomalies, which have socio-cultural consequences as well and are hard to tackle in the long term. The participants agreed that a peace dividend would positively boost the economy on both sides.

³⁰ Varosha, currently a ghost town, used to be a vivid tourist resort of Famagusta situated on Cyprus' East coast. For more information on the assessment of cost of reconstruction of Varosha as well as of the whole of Cyprus see: Mullen, F., Oğuz, O., & Kyriacou, P. A. (2010). *The Day After III The Cyprus Peace Dividend for Turkey and Greece*. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Center.

Written Contributions by Participants of the Heybeliada Talks

Adhering to the Status Quo Implies No Vision

Joseph Bayada³¹

When I was ten years old, Cyprus was still a British colony. On Sundays, my father used to take me to Boghaz, 25 kilometers north of my hometown of Famagusta, for a cup of tea with his friend Kostas at his little hotel. I remember how much I used to enjoy reading on the tarmac of the road as the car ran over them the huge letters with the slogan for self-government. Finally, and rather unexpectedly, we got independence; yet as one might realize, it was mismanaged. Greek Cypriots still insisted on Enosis, union with Greece, whereas Turkish Cypriots were still longing for Taksim, partition of the island.

Time went by and we came to the 1974 events, when the Greek coup and the Turkish invasion unfortunately marked the fate of the country indelibly, at least for the foreseeable future. Talks for a solution to the Cyprus problem started again and continue to this very moment. This is the second time that it occurred to me we might finally reach a solution. The first one was in the year 2004.

There are quite a number of people on either side of Cyprus who are striving badly for a solution. I am afraid, though, that there is still a great deal of people on both sides who are satisfied with the status quo: hoping for some sort of recognition or sticking to Turkey, in the North; and with false certainty that the present situation of economic prosperity will continue ad infinitum and that the fear of losing their “Greekness” will not materialize, in the South. It is my conviction that these views do not rest on solid ground.

On the 28th of January this year, there was a huge demonstration, of 40,000 people strong, in the North of Cyprus against the economic austerity measures introduced by the UBP administration. At the same time, demonstrators criticized

³¹ Joseph Bayada is former President of the New Cyprus Association.

the Turkish government imposing upon them and the grip that Turkey has on the life of Turkish Cypriots overall. The size and the vibrancy of the rally were reminiscent of those in the years 2002-03, whereby Mr. Denktaş was deposed.

It is well known that the economy in the North survives because it is heavily subsidized by Turkey and due to the inflow of Turkish investments. It is also well known that the economy in the North is parasitic, entertaining a huge unproductive public sector that is far from sustainable. Nevertheless, beyond the economy, progressive Turkish Cypriots and intellectuals have a strong feeling of not being masters of their own fate and are rather being led and governed by Turkey.

Greek Cypriots in the South have a fairly sound economy because of the rapid expansion of services, the tertiary sector of the economy. Nonetheless, the economy is still plagued with structural problems and diseconomies of scale, let alone the Turkish embargo on Cypriot shipping and air transport. Moreover, because of uncertainty, internal and foreign investments are still lagging behind. More importantly in the field of social values, the society bears a heavy cost because the unresolved Cyprus problem takes up most of the time and the interest of the people. To this end, one should add what it means to have on the other side of the “green line” the presence of 40,000 Turkish troops!

It is perhaps not realized how much the two Cypriot communities have in common, having lived in mixed communities for nearly four and a half centuries. While this is not reflected in language (religion is not important to Turkish Cypriots), it is manifested in customs, manners, habits, virtues and vices.

The wounds of the 1974 events cannot easily be healed nor rewritten. Despite all difficulties, a solution to serve both communities could be reached within the year in view of the progress that has been achieved with regard to the talks on the chapters of governance, the economy and EU affairs. Nonetheless, I feel Turkey should play a more constructive role in this connection, respecting the sovereignty of the future federal Cyprus.

Neither community wants to see itself as a pawn of the “motherlands” – Greek Cypriots were never as independent of Greece as they are today – and their country not as a country but as a protectorate. Incidentally, in the event of a solution, Cyprus will have to speak with one voice in Brussels. In spite of past mistakes, Cypriots can turn this year into a window of opportunity –

achieving prosperity and after many years of unrest, peace! But in order to do this, we have to look into the future with a vision of having ahead of us a restructured, multicultural society, embracing EU values and a unified economy with fewer diseconomies of scale and basic structural problems. This is a future that will rest on synergy and interdependence without antagonism, bigotry and confrontation, signalling an end to the present and unacceptable status quo. The extrapolation of the past will not help. On the contrary, a new vision will lead to peace and prosperity for all Cypriots, removing a thorny problem from the still tense, not normalized relations between Turkey and Greece. It will also relieve the international community of a headache that has plagued it for more than half a century.

Building Bridges on a Divided Island: The Case of Cyprus

Katie Clerides³²

Our response to the conflict internationally to date has mainly been restricted to response by armed force, followed by international diplomacy and formal negotiations. Very little has been done to address the root causes of conflict, which, among other reasons, have to do with the continuing imbalance in the world economic and political order, ethnic identity issues and competing territorial claims. We are only just beginning to realize that in addition to all of the above, climate change due to global warming is quite likely to be the trigger for even more conflicts in the future. These are issues that need to be dealt with at the macro level between the member states of the world community, as in the case of the international discussions on the response to climate change and the reduction in world poverty.

What I am going to focus on here is what can be done at the micro level of citizen peace building to encourage responding to conflicts by non-violent means. To move from the general to the particular, I would like to illustrate what I mean by looking at the case of Cyprus and the work of citizen peace builders (what we in Cyprus refer to as bi-communal activists) in their efforts to build bridges of communication and trust in a divided island.

The Cyprus conflict makes an interesting case study because there are aspects of the conflict that touch on the macro level and aspects that touch on the micro level:

- At the international level, it is affected by and affects the interests of the USA, the EU and Britain (which has sovereign bases on the island);
- Greece and Turkey are considered by the two parties of the conflict to be their respective motherlands and both, along with Britain, are guarantor powers of the island's independence under the 1960 Zurich and London Agreements. Hence the relationship between the two motherlands impacts the problem;
- Finally, there is the troubled relationship of the two communities on the island reaching back over the last 50 years.

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All three levels interact with and impact each other.

It was within the context of this very complicated political scene that the citizen activists began their efforts in the early 1990s, starting with conflict resolution workshops, to promote the idea of citizen diplomacy in the direction of rapprochement and peace building.

I want to make it clear at the outset that it is not my contention that citizen diplomacy can replace power politics, traditional diplomacy or “real politik,” which continue to remain the only tools we have at the macro level. However, it is my contention that citizen diplomacy has a very important role to play in improving the climate for a solution to be achieved through negotiations at the macro level and that they are essential for any political solution to be successful in the long term.

Let us start by looking at the situation in which the citizen activists found themselves when they started to get organized in the early ‘90s:

- Division of the island had meant that there had been almost no contact between Greek and Turkish Cypriots over the last fifty years and this in turn had led to the development of the enemy image and de-humanization of the other;
- Both communities saw themselves as victims and the other side as perpetrator;
- Nationalistic political discourse, i.e. anyone that questions the political behaviour of his/her own side is branded as a traitor and the media reproduces and encourages this nationalistic discourse;
- Independent political thought and political critique are frowned upon; anyone who tries to explain the view of the other side is considered to have gone over to the other side and therefore not to pursue the interests of his/her own side.

Many political careers have been built on the conflict and therefore often have an interest in maintaining it.

The importance of in-depth dialogue

How does one start to build bridges of communication and to break down stereotypes in situations like this? In Cyprus, we started out by attending workshops in conflict resolution (CR) training with a strong focus on dialogue and communication. The main focus was learning to understand with the head and the heart how the other side perceives the situation. It is important to look at the fears, hopes, aspirations and interests that underlie the other side's political positions. It is necessary to understand the other side's perception of my group's behaviour and positions, i.e. do they understand it in the same way that I do? What is my side's responsibility for the current situation? Getting over the "victim" stance and accepting a measure of the blame for the conflict. This in turn will influence each side's willingness to compromise and accept a compromise solution.

The aim is to work together for long enough so that when you sit around the table to discuss the problem, you look at the problem as something that has to be tackled jointly and not as though you are two opposing sides. This happens when both sides become so sensitive to the needs of the other side that they try to propose solutions that will meet the other side's needs as well as their own.

Conclusion

One could argue that in Cyprus the bi-communal peace activists have failed in the sense that we still have not achieved a solution to our problem.

Certainly on the Greek Cypriot side we have not been able to transfer our experiences and values to the wider community, although we did have some success with the political leadership, who now at least pay lip-service to the importance of bi-communal contacts even if they do not actively participate. There is nevertheless still a tendency for people to view the bi-communal activists either as a marginal or elitist group. This is our challenge for the future; we still have a lot of work to do within our own community.

However, as a result of the CR work there is a significant core group of people in the two communities who do hold common values, who are able to communicate and who continue to work for a joint aim - the reunification of the island within the agreed parameters of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation - in spite of the difficulties and disappointments. This in itself is, I believe, an

achievement and holds value.

Margaret Mead, the great anthropologist, once said: “Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

Reassessing the EU's Role in Cyprus

Erhan Erçin³³

Up until 2004, the European Union was able to play a relatively constructive role in promoting unification in Cyprus. The prospect of EU membership was a catalyst providing momentum with a natural deadline for a solution to the long-running Cyprus problem. However, following the Greek Cypriot rejection of the UN-led Comprehensive Settlement Plan (the Annan Plan) and accession of their administration alone into the EU on 1st May 2004, the EU has been unable to make any significant contribution towards a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus.

The unprecedented accession to the EU of a divided territory has ensured a major inequality between the two communities in Cyprus. Greek Cypriots have gained full representation in EU institutions and benefit from all the rights of EU membership, while the Turkish Cypriots, who had voted for the settlement and EU membership in the referendum, are left in limbo with no representation and unable to take full advantage of their rights as EU citizens.

Having one part of the island inside the EU while the other is left out has destroyed the impartiality of the EU, effectively making it a secondary party to the conflict. In an attempt to deal with this abnormal situation, the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council resolved on 26th April 2004 to prepare Turkish Cypriots for a solution by lifting the isolations on North Cyprus and encouraging the development of its economy, thus aiming to complete the unfinished job of solving the Cyprus problem and integrate North Cyprus with the EU.

These aims of the EU are of course mutually dependent. The proposal for direct trade with North Cyprus, first made by the Commission in 2004, sought to achieve these objectives. While the proposed Direct Trade Regulation was also leverage by which to encourage Greek Cypriots towards a solution, it has so far been prevented by Greek Cypriots from coming to fruition.

The Green Line and Financial Aid Regulations were implemented, but have not had the intended positive effects. Although the Green Line Regulation is currently the only opportunity for Turkish Cypriots to trade with Europe, the Greek Cypriots have created numerous bureaucratic restrictions to discourage

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Turkish Cypriot trade. Despite reporting on these problems, the EU has been unable to be effective in resolving them. Adoption of the Financial Aid Regulation was delayed by Greek Cypriot lobbying for two years until 2006, and in the period since then, the implementation of many important infrastructure projects supported under this Regulation were also stalled by Greek Cypriot interventions.

Despite the good intentions of the EU, a powerful Greek Cypriot presence and strong lobbying have ensured that the EU is unable to achieve its stated objectives on the Cyprus problem. There is thus a clear need for the EU to adopt a mechanism by which to deal with the negative effects of Greek Cypriot lobbying, which is blocking the achievement of EU policy and preventing the EU from making a positive contribution to a solution of the Cyprus problem.

Time is passing and there is a long way to go for the suspension of the *acquis* to be lifted. The proposed Direct Trade Regulation remains on the table. While the Commission has not withdrawn its proposal, the necessary initiatives have not been taken by the EU to bring about its implementation. On the contrary, the European Parliament's Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) recently rejected the possibility of a role for Parliament in the implementation of the Regulation as provided for under the Lisbon Treaty. This has ensured that the Greek Cypriots continue to be able to take advantage of their member state status to block adoption of the Regulation in the Council and caused a great opportunity for the development of Parliament's political influence to be missed.

Although on accession, six seats in the European Parliament were allocated to Cyprus, taking into consideration the entire population of the island (including Turkish Cypriots), not even observer status has been granted to Turkish Cypriot representatives. As an interim measure, the EU established a High Level Contact Group, whose mandate is to promote Turkish Cypriot relations with the EU. However, as these EU representatives do not even stay in the North when they visit Cyprus and their agendas include more contact time with Greek Cypriots than with Turkish Cypriots, this has proved to be a thoroughly ineffective mechanism. As the Group's reports are produced with inadequate consultation, they are inevitably futile.

The accession of only one part of the island into the EU has deepened major legal, political and economic inequalities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The failure of the EU to implement its policies to deal with these consequences

has damaged relations between the two communities and had a negative influence on the progress of settlement negotiations between them.

In addition to the inequalities of political representation within EU institutions, the ability of the Greek Cypriot administration to preside over matters concerning the Turkish Cypriot side was further entrenched by the decision of the Court of Justice in the *Orams* case. This case, concerning property located in the North, found that although their government does not exercise effective control there, the Greek Cypriot courts have domestic jurisdiction over the area of North Cyprus.

As a further impediment to the settlement negotiations, this case thus holds that one side has legal jurisdiction over the other, which enforces the inequality between two communities by ensuring *de jure* sovereignty and control by one community over the administration that the two once shared. Developments such as these do not contribute positively to negotiations to unify the island by the establishment of the bi-communal, bi-zonal federal state pursued by the two communities in Cyprus and by the international community.

The EU still has a role to play, for example in providing new aid measures to promote more economic and social development to bring North Cyprus in line with EU standards. Initiatives should be made to undo the stalemate in the adoption of the Direct Trade Regulation, in order to enable the EU to fulfil its objectives.

Key EU statespersons, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who recently visited the South and made unfounded statements regarding Turkey and Turkish Cypriots, often only serve to de-motivate efforts towards a settlement, having a negative effect on the UN-sponsored negotiations. Instead, efforts should be made to improve contacts with Turkish Cypriots. Representatives at all levels should be advised to be more neutral, to visit the Turkish Cypriot side and to avoid making statements that jeopardise the negotiations.

The current circumstances allows the Greek Cypriots to be very comfortable at the negotiating table, enabling them to slow the process and focus their efforts on attempts to gain concessions by being a barrier to Turkey's EU negotiations rather than aiming to resolve the Cyprus problem. The EU should therefore develop new policies to minimise Greek Cypriots' use of their EU membership status to gain political advantage from Turkey's accession process.

Since the Greek Cypriots, who claim to represent the whole island (including Turkish Cypriots) have become a member of the EU, it is no longer possible for the EU to be impartial when it comes to the Cyprus problem. However, if it is to regain any credibility, the EU should promote progress in the bi-communal UN negotiations for a solution with a more balanced policy towards the two communities, rather than facilitating barriers to the achievement of a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus.

Partition Cannot Be a Solution

Takis Hadjidemetriou³⁴

Almost everything has been said and written about the Cyprus problem. All international organizations have been used and all governments, directly or indirectly related to the problem have been involved. Almost all alternatives that may have existed, be it military, political or diplomatic, have been exhaustively examined and used. It is really difficult for one to think of something new or to imagine other initiatives beyond those we all have witnessed during the last fifty years.

However, the problem still remains unsolved, a situation that raises the question: what are the implications of the prolongation of the crisis and where will it lead us? Is partition an alternative, as a number of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots tend to believe, and if so, what kind of solution would partition be? Could the partition of Cyprus and the creation of two separate states really give a viable solution and lasting peace to Cyprus?

It might be examined as a possibility, if certain preconditions are fulfilled. First, if it comes as a result of an agreement that would create stable and harmonious relations between the two parts or states. Second, if it creates two actually independent states without any foreign intervention, particularly by the “mother countries” of Greece and Turkey. Third, if such an option would solve all the problems of individual citizens leaving no feelings of bitterness to poison the atmosphere along the way. Fourth, if there could be optimal communication and contact between the two sides. Fifth, if partition could solve problems relating to membership and representation at the EU and its institutional bodies.

Nonetheless, all these are no more than mere speculation. The existence of two separate entities in Cyprus emerged as a result of a confrontational situation, the main characteristic of which was ethnic conflict, and it has had wider repercussions in the region directly involving Turkey and Greece. Hence, partition could only emerge as a final result after new, perhaps more intensive, crises and tension, not as a result of mutual agreement and understanding. What will follow will certainly be two hostile states suspicious of each other’s intentions, keeping armies alert for confrontation, having and seeking to satisfy conflicting interests.

³⁴ Takis Hadjidemetriou is former head of Cyprus EU negotiation team.

Moreover, would it not be the case that the interminably hostile relations between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey would perpetuate the confrontation of the two separate entities in Cyprus, not excluding violent eruptions every now and then?

In the case of partition, under what prerequisites and what procedure will the Turkish Cypriot state accede to the EU? After all, what possibilities of recognition a Turkish Cypriot state might have, built, as a matter of fact, on occupied territory and depending on the Turkish army? What viability, what political or economic stability might be safeguard to it? Wouldn't it wholly depend on Ankara for its survival?

Within such a framework, one should exclude the possibility of a workable common representation of such separate entities in the EU. Common representation presupposes the existence of common interests, as well as unifying mechanisms that could not be found or built on the case of two separate states.

On the other hand, the Republic of Cyprus, having survived in the areas controlled by the government, will most probably not be able to represent the whole of the island forever. The Republic of Cyprus was established on the basis of effective participation of the two communities in the government and of a particular political and population structure. Accordingly, the Greek Cypriots alone cannot monopolize the Republic of Cyprus. The state of Cyprus, its independence, the continued existence of the two communities, the preservation of their entity, their national and cultural identity, can best be safeguarded in coexistence and cohabitation, in the preservation of basic historical features of the population and in particular the demographic structure. The European motto "unity in diversity" is absolutely fitting in this respect.

Both Greek and Turkish Cypriots have internalized the new circumstances both within and outside of Cyprus. The "enosis" dream has long ago foundered for Greek Cypriots while "taksim" no more has the influence it had amongst Turkish Cypriots in the past. The European Union is the meeting place of the two communities. Their loyalties should be directed to Brussels rather than to Athens or Ankara.

Cyprus's independence is one and undivided, embracing the whole of the people and the land. Overturning either the unity of the state or the demographic structure of the population will not lead to separate independences. It will just

do away with both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot independence. It will be the end of Cyprus both as a state and as a historical and cultural entity.

Apart from the above implications, many other issues have been added as by-products of the Cyprus problem; issues of social, economic, and environmental nature, as well as issues relating to health, drug and human trafficking, organized crime, nationalism and racism. All these lead to a chaotic situation at the cost of the whole of society, especially the youth in both northern and southern Cyprus.

The failure to reach a compromise solution (the referendum of 2004) and, on the other hand, the inapplicability of partition brings the Cyprus problem back to the interminable deadlock of the pre-referendum period. The question is how long this situation can be maintained without a solution - how stable the status quo is.

The situation is too complex to allow the pronouncement of a final verdict or a forecast in absolute terms. However, a comprehensive evaluation of the past 37 or 47 years leads an attentive observer to think that the problems piled up year after year will at some time become an unbearable burden. If this anticipation is correct, then there is no other alternative than that of a compromise solution serving the interests of all parties involved. Such a solution is not unfeasible if each side empathizes with each other's concerns and if such knowledge and bitter experience is accounted for.

Turkish Cypriots and the “Cypriot Solution”

Mete Hatay³⁵

The latest “last chance” negotiations in Cyprus appear to be winding to an inconclusive close after almost three years. After Greek Cypriots defeated the last UN reunification plan at a referendum in 2004, former Republic of Cyprus president Tassos Papadopoulos presided over a further four years of bad will between the two main communities of the island. Only with the election of Dimitris Christofias, leader of the historically pro-solution communist party AKEL, could negotiations begin again towards what Christofias began to call a “Cypriot solution,” a local settlement to be agreed on without the interference of foreign powers. The course of current negotiations has shown, however, that a supposed “Cypriot solution” is never only local, indeed that any local solution will always be arrived at through the careful use of geo-strategy. Cypriots are fond of calling Cyprus “the island that everyone wanted,” but they have also proven quite adept at manipulating Cyprus’ regional position and geopolitical alliances to maneuver diplomatic advantages.

An example recently presented itself through tensions between Turkish Cypriots and the Turkish government in February 2011. The Turkish government gives millions of dollars each year to a community that has suffered from political and economic isolation for approximately fifty years. In the past few months, however, Turkish leaders began to demand the implementation of austerity measures in Cyprus’ north that met with resistance from and protests by the civil servants who were their primary target. When tensions began to escalate between Turkish Cypriot union leaders and politicians and the Turkish government, a representative of AKEL and member of the European Union parliament lodged a complaint with that body about the behavior of Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan. As happens in so many other cases, the recognized government in Cyprus’ south uses its role to speak for “all” Cypriots, often doing so under the guise of a common Cypriot identity while simultaneously depriving Turkish Cypriots of a political voice. The fact that an AKEL member was able to complain to the EU parliament “on behalf of” Turkish Cypriots is a result of all six of Cyprus’ EU seats being occupied by Greek Cypriots, despite two of those seats having been calculated on the basis of the island’s Turkish Cypriot population.

³⁵ Mete Hatay is Senior Research Consultant at the PRIO Cyprus Center (Peace Research Institute Oslo – Cyprus Center).

Indeed, the negotiation of a “Cypriot solution” has proven to be highly asymmetric, with Christofias engaging in discussions with two subsequent Turkish Cypriot leaders while at the same time using the Republic of Cyprus’ position as a recognized state and EU member to pressure Turkey. AKEL politicians often remark that the “key” to negotiations lies with Turkey, belying their own avowed belief in the necessity for Cypriots to work out a solution among themselves. As a result, AKEL has pursued a strategy of calling for international leaders to avoid intervention or pressure that would affect their own position in negotiations, while using all means available to them outside the island to affect a change in Turkey’s, rather than Turkish Cypriots’, position. Where Turkish Cypriots enter this geostrategic game is primarily when they show themselves to be pawns of Turkey or resist becoming such pawns. In 2010, for instance, when conservative Derviş Eroğlu replaced leftist Mehmet Ali Talat as Turkish Cypriot president and chief negotiator, AKEL attempted to show Turkey’s hand in the elections and thereby to “prove” that Turkey did not, in fact, desire a solution. Or following recent protests over Turkey’s imposition of austerity measures, AKEL leaders claimed that soured relations with Turkey would be good for negotiations, as though such a break was the only impediment to a unified state.

Turkish Cypriots, in turn, have used the past several years to push towards more and more independence, both from Greek Cypriots and from Turkey, even as they have found themselves squeezed more and more from both sides. In 2004, many Turkish Cypriots had voted in favor of the UN reunification plan because it would have given them an ethnically Turkish Cypriot state in a recognized, federal system. Others voted for the plan in the belief that the EU would reward them for their efforts. But after the plan’s defeat, Greek Cypriots succeeded in preventing EU leaders from fulfilling promises made to Turkish Cypriots, including promises of direct flights and direct trade. Former Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat managed to achieve a certain “upgrading” of Turkish Cypriots’ status, as more and more diplomats and civil society representatives sought to engage them. But Talat never achieved his promises of “tying north Cyprus to the world,” and insofar as Turkish Cypriots became increasingly tied to the world, it was primarily through Turkey. Over the past several years, Turkey’s growing economic power and the draw of the Turkish market have persuaded many international corporations to ignore Greek Cypriot complaints about entry into north Cyprus, so that for the first time

international chains and financial institutions have opened in the island's north. But the result has been an increasingly dissatisfying sense of reliance on Turkey and increasing penetration of Turkish capital that has paralleled Greek Cypriot attempts to control Turkish Cypriots' relations with the EU. Both politically and economically, then, Turkish Cypriots have only incrementally increased the space in a cage that still remains locked.

A "Cypriot solution," then, stumbles over the issue of recognition, which allows Greek Cypriots to pursue a power game that marginalizes their Turkish Cypriot counterparts. While gaining such advantages may be an expectable strategy in most negotiations, the hands-off approach of the international community to these particular talks has been predicated on an assumption of good will, a belief that the leaders really will stick it out to the end. In this particular game, all the carrots seem on the Greek Cypriot side, and there are no sticks in sight. And while rising tensions in the north appear to be primarily a reaction to Turkey, they are also a response by Turkish Cypriots to lack of political voice and frustration about an uncertain future. While the recent election of nationalist politicians who prefer an independent state shows that Turkish Cypriots reject AKEL's claim to speak for "all Cypriots," protests against Turkey also demonstrate a desire for more autonomy from their patron state.

As in previous negotiations, these talks are likely to fizzle out in a continuation of the status quo. At the same time, Turkish Cypriots are becoming increasingly frustrated and volatile, and they also recognize that the winners in previous negotiations have been Greek Cypriots, who got EU membership, and Turkey, which got EU candidacy. Their own desires for political voice have too often been stifled by the clamoring of these two recognized powers, whose battles usually take place with much noise and little substance. For Greek Cypriots, their counterparts in the island's north appear to be more a utility than an entity, while for Turkey their "co-ethnics" in Cyprus oscillate between the status of a bargaining chip and burden. According to an African saying, when elephants fight, the grass suffers. We may yet discover in this case that the grass also has thorns.

Federation Remains Only a Negotiated Settlement, but Public Skepticism and Mistrust Remain a Challenge³⁶

Erol Kaymak³⁷

‘Cyprus 2015: Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future’, a research initiative designed to increase dialogue between the two main communities in Cyprus, releases the results of its most recent comprehensive public opinion poll today. The findings of the survey contribute towards the development of a road map for the constructive engagement and participation of the wider public in the peace process, in a way that will enhance the sense of societal ownership – and by extension the long-term viability – of any future political settlement.

The poll shows that Greek Cypriots (GC) and Turkish Cypriots (TC) have a high desire for a settlement (68% GC, 65% TC) and are prepared to accept federation as a compromise settlement (79% GC, 76% TC). The existing Cypriot-owned process attracts significant support from both communities (83% GC, 60% TC), while a mechanism of public information on the peace process is also highly desired (88% GC, 77% TC). However, challenges remain in terms of high lack of trust towards the other side (84% GC, 70% TC) and concern about dominance by the other side (87% GC, 59% TC).

“The current round of negotiations to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem has reached a critical phase. Federation remains the only consensual, negotiable settlement model. Yet, the ongoing peace process takes place in an environment of ongoing lack of trust between Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots and ongoing alienation of the public opinion, within both communities, from the peace process. Should there be a breakthrough, people will be called upon to cast votes in referenda. The effort to reach a comprehensive settlement at a political level should be complemented by an effort to bridge the

³⁶ Sözen, A., Christou, S., Lordos, A., & Kaymak, E. (2010). *Cyprus 2015: Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future*. Nicosia: Joint Programme Unit for United Nations / Interpeace Initiatives (JPU). Available online http://www.cyprus2015.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75%3Aafederation-remains-only-negotiated-settlement-but-public-skepticism-and-mistrust-remain-a-challenge&catid=3%3Alatest-news&Itemid=57&lang=en, February 10, 2011.

³⁷ Erol Kaymak is an Associate Professor at the Eastern Mediterranean University. The survey was conducted by Erol Kaymak, Ahmet Sözen, Spyros Christou, and Alexandros Lordos.

lack of confidence that exists at a social level, vis-à-vis the settlement” mentions Ahmet Sözen, ‘Cyprus 2015 Programme Co-Director.

The United Nations Secretary-General observed in his recent report on his good offices mission “while there is an appetite for peace in both communities, public scepticism regarding the potential success of the ongoing negotiations in reaching a lasting agreement continues to grow. Polls indicate overwhelmingly low public expectations that a settlement will be reached, as well as distrust on both sides that, if a settlement were to be reached, the other side would have any serious intention of honoring it. A solution therefore needs more than a comprehensive plan. It needs strong and determined leadership that will make the public case for a united Cyprus with all the benefits this brings.” (S/2010/603, 24 November 2010).

“The Cyprus 2015 initiative was conceived in light of the need to provide a forum through which research and dialogue contribute to a sustainable future. Whereas negotiations require confidentiality, the legitimacy of any settlement also requires transparency and participation. The project fills a gap in the current debate on the Cyprus problem. By merging objective research with in-depth stakeholder discussions the project aims to contribute towards a sustainable settlement of the Cyprus Problem in a way that complements current peace efforts on the island”, mentions Spyros Christou, ‘Cyprus 2015’ Programme Co-Director.

Cyprus 2015 has been contributing to the participatory function in a number of ways. In the near future, Cyprus 2015 will publish reports and screen documentaries that outline the hopes and fears people have regarding the future, as well as on the means for sustainable development. Cyprus 2015 has also been conducting island-wide public opinion polls, the latest of which is outlined below.

The Cyprus 2015 Initiative is implemented in collaboration with Interpeace – International Peacebuilding Alliance, an international peacebuilding NGO based in Geneva (www.interpeace.org). It is supported by UNDP-Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT) Programme in Cyprus (www.undp-act.org) and the European Commission Representation in Cyprus.

The full findings of the public opinion polls conducted by ‘Cyprus 2015’ are available at the initiative’s website: www.Cyprus2015.org. A summary of the most recent public opinion poll findings follows.

Poll Findings: Despite low expectations, Cypriots have strong desire for a solution and they tolerate compromise. However, challenges remain.

The latest island-wide public opinion poll, conducted in the context of the 'Cyprus 2015: Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future' initiative, shows that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots retain a strong desire for a solution to the Cyprus problem and are prepared for compromise in a number of areas. But their expectations are low and finding middle ground in some areas will be a challenge. A particular problem emerges in the form of a gap between first track negotiators and the general public, especially in preparation for potential referenda.

The Peace Process

Large majorities (68% GC, 65% TC) wish that the negotiations will lead to a settlement. Only a minority (14% GC, 21% TC) prefers that nothing comes of the process. Against this, equally large majorities do not believe the negotiations will lead to results (65% GC, 69% TC).

Arbitration is the least popular role for the UN (33% GC, 51% TC), while both communities strongly favor a role for the UN which would involve submitting ideas, but leaving it up to the sides to decide whether and how they will make use of them (82% GC, 70% TC).

Both communities support the appointment of an EU representative in the negotiations, who will be there to offer technical support when needed in matters related to Cyprus' responsibilities as an EU state (88% GC, 62% TC)

In contrast, Greek Cypriots reject the inclusion of 'motherlands' by appointment of representatives to participate in the discussion on all pending chapters of the negotiations (44%) while Turkish Cypriots are in favor (64%). Neither community supports changing the format of the talks so that they no longer take place between the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus (43% GC, 32% TC).

People generally expect the leaders to jointly set benchmarks in order to achieve a mutually agreed settlement (86% GC, 72% TC). Additionally, both communities agree that leaders should be meeting as frequently as possible to this end (80% GC, 70% TC). Both communities – but especially the Greek Cypriots – tend to agree with a parallel discussion of all remaining dossiers with a process of give and take between them (72% GC, 60% TC).

There is general support for the role of leader representatives in preparing the ground before the leaders themselves convene for intensive talks (77% GC, 75% TC). Both communities believe that the role of expert working groups (88% GC, 68% TC) and technical committees (88% GC, 63% TC) should be upgraded in the talks.

There is general support for the idea that independent think tanks should be established to provide the leaderships with new ideas for the resolution of pending issues in the talks (89% GC, 64% TC) and for the creation of a mechanism whereby ordinary citizens are informed on a regular basis of what is going on in the peace process (88% GC, 77% TC).

Motivating Factors

Both communities consider bringing Cyprus forward into a new era of long term sustainable peace (98% GC, 73% TC) and allowing Cyprus to be a normal state fully integrated into the EU without the Cyprus Problem pulling it down (86%, 65%) to be important motivating factors for solving the Cyprus problem.

Economic factors are also seen as important motivating factors by both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, such as to create new business and job opportunities (89% GC, 77% TC) and to increase the potential for attracting foreign investment to Cyprus (84% GC, 69% TC).

Greek Cypriots are particularly motivated by the prospect of achieving the departure of foreign troops from the island (98%) and achieving the termination of the guarantees and rights of intervention (96%). Turkish Cypriots are not keen to see the departure of foreign troops from the island (31%) and the termination of guarantees and rights of intervention (25%).

Greek Cypriots consider essential allowing refugees to return to their homes (99%) and recovering the control of towns and villages lost in 1963 / 1974 (98%).

Turkish Cypriots would like to see an end to their international isolation (76%) and to enjoying the benefits of being EU citizens (74%)

Constraining Factors

A factor for both communities not wanting to solve the Cyprus problem is the idea that the other side would never accept the actual compromises and concessions that are needed for a fair and viable settlement (84% GC, 70% TC) and the idea that the other side would not honor the agreement and therefore implementation would fail (82% GC, 68% TC)

Not desiring to be governed through a political system where the two communities share power (58% GC, 54% TC) or being anxious that through a settlement the other side might de facto end up controlling all of Cyprus (87% GC, 59% TC) are constraining factors for both communities. Greek Cypriots are especially concerned with the prospect of a solution leading to a dysfunctional system of administration (63%).

Both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots express concern that through a settlement conditions for renewed violence between the two communities might be created (69% GC, 56% TC)

Turkish Cypriots are constrained by the idea that too much time has passed with the two communities being apart and we can no longer live together (53%).

Greek Cypriots express a concern that their community might be called to carry the burden of the cost of the solution and end up subsidizing the other community (59%), whereas Turkish Cypriots are more concerned about the costs of solving the property issue in a solution proving to be too high (52%).

Both communities would be constrained in supporting a solution in case the solution plan does not create conditions of true political equality between the two communities (71% GC, 71% TC)

Turkish Cypriots are discouraged by disappointment over a peace process that has been going on for a very long time (55%) and over a UN System that is perceived to be favoring the other side (54%).

A vast majority of Greek Cypriots would be discouraged in case the solution plan deviates from the implementation of human rights, European principles and European values (95%) or in case the solution plan benefits the interests of Turkey over the interests of Cypriots (96%).

The Settlement Framework

Greek Cypriots favor a unitary state over other alternatives (92% support). Federation is a distant second, but still acceptable to a majority of the population (79% support). Turkish Cypriots favor two states (90% support), but are prepared to accept federation as a compromise (76% support).

Greek Cypriots strongly support their own interpretation of federation – without restrictions to residence rights and without ‘motherland’ guarantees – (87% support), but consider the Turkish Cypriot interpretation of federation (28% support) to be even worse than the status quo (37% support).

In contrast, Turkish Cypriots strongly support their interpretation of federation – with restrictions to residence rights and ‘motherland’ guarantees – (66% support), while they consider the Greek Cypriot interpretation of federation (53% support) to be worse than the status quo (64% support).

Consensual separation scenarios, while unacceptable to a majority of Greek Cypriots, are seen as marginally preferable to the status quo (38% support).

For Turkish Cypriots, a consensual separation with both states in the EU is seen as the ideal outcome (79% support), even more preferred than the Turkish Cypriot interpretation of federation (69% support), while interim solutions such as Taiwanization or Kosovoization are rejected as half measures (50% and 46% support respectively).

Opposition to annexation of the north by Turkey seems to be the one point where the perspectives of the two communities converge (option ranked last in both communities).

Next Steps (in case we reach the end of 2010 and no significant progress in the peace talks has yet been made)

Both communities – especially Greek Cypriots – support continuing with the current format of direct negotiations between the leaders of the two communities under the auspices of the UN until success is reached (83% GC, 60% TC). Additionally, it is preferred not to move the process to a phase of UN arbitration in order to finalise all aspects of the plan that were not agreed by the leaders (42% GC, 46% TC).

Both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots support moving the process to an international conference through which to resolve all pending issues (60% GC, 55% TC), or continuing with broadened direct negotiations between the leaders of the two communities by including representatives of Greece, Turkey and the EU in the talks (59% GC, 53% TC).

Turkish Cypriots would welcome a shift in emphasis towards lifting all economic, social and cultural isolations from their community (79% support) or terminating the talks and moving towards recognition of the 'TRNC' (58% support), but such alternatives gather almost no support among Greek Cypriots (16% and 3% support respectively).

Both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots agree with putting the current basis of talks to referendum in both communities and if not accepted to change the basis of the talks (53% GC, 55% TC). However, Greek Cypriots do not agree with changing the basis of the talks to negotiated partition through a territory / property for recognition deal (only 11% support).

Many Turkish Cypriots would support closing down UNFICYP operations (48% support), but this option is rejected by Greek Cypriots (only 11% support).

Survey Profile

Sample Size: 800 Greek Cypriots and 800 Turkish Cypriots

Sampling Process: Multi-stage Random Stratified Sampling

Method of Data Collection: Face-to-Face Interviews with a Structured Questionnaire at Homes of Respondents and in their Native Language

Period of Data Collection: 5th–30th September 2010

Project Team: Ahmet Sözen, Spyros Christou, Alexandros Lordos, Erol Kaymak

Questionnaire Design: Through a participatory process which included key stakeholders from both communities

Field Work: Symmetron Market Research for Greek Cypriots and KADEM Cyprus Social Research for Turkish Cypriots

Speech of the General Secretary of the C.C. of AKEL³⁸

Andros Kyprianou³⁹

Thank you very much for the invitation to attend and be one of the keynote speakers of this seminar. This invitation assumes a particular significance since I consider it important to have direct communication between Greek Cypriots and Turks. Only through this direct communication is it possible to know the real intentions of one another. Only through dialogue can we create the conditions enabling us to reach a solution of the differences that divide us. I consider that the organisation of such seminars by an eminently prestigious research center such as the Global Political Trends Center of Istanbul Kültür University can lead to invaluable conclusions, particularly when a complex and long-standing problem such as the Cyprus problem is being discussed.

In studying Cyprus and Cypriot history, one can say that our island was blessed by a wish and burdened by a curse. Cyprus is blessed in having an important geographical position, situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa. It is blessed as being a centremost country between the various peoples, transformed into an important economic centre and hence enriching its cultural heritage. Regretfully, Cyprus can also be considered as cursed for precisely the same reasons. Its important geographical position attracted many occupiers over centuries. The mighty forces at each given historical period always strove to occupy Cyprus so that they could subsequently control the wider region.

That is why the people of Cyprus were condemned to always struggle for what many peoples of the world consider self-evident, that is to say, for freedom and peace. This is also reconfirmed by the recent history of the island. Before 1974, even before 1960 itself, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were living together all over the island. The two communities, free from divisionary ideologies and separatist lines, were sharing the same living conditions, joys, pain and suffering. They had common goals and developed common struggles. The terrible living conditions British colonialism had imposed on the Cypriot people pushed Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to struggle together to assert their rights. A review of workers struggles in Cypriot history is sufficient

³⁸ Delivered as keynote speech at the 9th Round of the Heybeliada Talks in January 2011.

³⁹ Andros Kyprianou is General Secretary of the Progressive Party for the Working People (AKEL).

to demonstrate the unity with which Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot working people had fought to attain social and political gains. One look at life in Cyprus before the various events that marked our people took place leads unequivocally to the conclusion that under the hot Cypriot sun no one could distinguish if the toil and sweat that nurtured the Cypriot land streamed from the forehead of Andreas or Ali. No one could distinguish if his or her colleague was Christian or Muslim.

I do not want to close my eyes. Of course, there were exceptions to this rule. There were Greek Cypriots who considered that the Turkish Cypriots should be confined to a secondary role on the island as the numerically smaller community. This, however, did not reflect the will of the majority of Greek Cypriots. Certainly, this did not reflect the will of the Left, which considered and still considers that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are the children of the same mother earth and have the same rights and responsibilities towards their common country. Of course, conversely there were also those Turkish Cypriots who considered the Greek Cypriots as enemies.

The international conditions prevailing in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s could not but affect Cyprus, bearing in mind its extremely important geopolitical position. The end of the Second World War, the rivalries between the victors and the growth of the movement for decolonisation left their mark on Cypriot history too. At that time, the anti-colonial struggle of the Cypriot people escalated. However, by then the two communities had been set on opposing paths. The bi-communal clashes intensified under the slogan of “Enosis” and “Taksim”. Certainly, this fact cannot exclusively be attributed to the tactics the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cyprus had chosen to attain their goals. Responsibility must also be laid on the British policy, which saw in the conflict of the two communities an excellent opportunity to maintain its influence in Cyprus. Thus, the transformation of the Cyprus issue from a question of liberating Cyprus from British colonial yoke into an issue of bi-communal strife was achieved whereby the British played the role of the arbitrator, involving both Greece and Turkey in this procedure.

Through this turbulent and dangerous course, we were led to the independence of Cyprus in 1960. It is well known that the establishment of the Cyprus state brought with it, inter alia, the heavy burdens of the permanent presence of foreign troops and bases on the island. Furthermore, the independent Republic

of Cyprus would function based on a given constitution. Notwithstanding this, no one can question that the Cyprus independence constituted a big and qualitative step for our country and people; that it was the most important gain which ended centuries of subjugation and slavery for the Cypriots and paved the way for new prospects; it created perspectives for continuing the common path of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and it could have put an end to the black parenthesis of the turbulent years of the conflict; that it would have been possible from that point onwards for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to work together under the roof of a unitary bi-communal state of which we would be co-managers.

Unfortunately, we did not all have the same plans and aspirations. Certain circles and forces within the Greek Cypriot community considered that independence was the starting point for the Union of Cyprus with Greece. Respectively, the extremist elements within the Turkish Cypriot community considered that it was the starting point for partition. These elements in both communities tore at the very heart and soul of the Republic of Cyprus. They thereby offered the pretext with open arms to those outside Cyprus who were lying in wait to promote their own plans and designs for Cyprus.

The events of 1974 were planned and executed so that the foreign plans would be implemented against Cyprus. Let us not forget that during the Cold War period, even if one leaf were to move in a part of the world, NATO wanted to control even the direction of that wind. A non-aligned, demilitarised and peaceful Cyprus did not serve its plans. Especially, if we take into account that Archbishop Makarios staunchly insisted on pursuing a non-aligned foreign policy and refused to grant bases to the USA. This is why NATO strove to use the bi-communal clashes to serve its own geopolitical and geo-strategic interests. It used the nationalists and chauvinists in both communities, as well as the Junta of Athens and Turkey to implement its plans in the black summer of 1974. Turkey used the chance offered to it by the execution of the coup d'état and the departure from the Constitution to invade Cyprus. Irrespective of the "pretexts" it used, it is evident that Turkey decided that it was handed a unique opportunity to promote its interests on the Island.

The events on 20th July 1974 caused many inflictions on the whole of the Cypriot people. It brought death, refugees, missing persons, mass colonization and the violation of human rights of Cypriots. The international community took

a very clear position regarding the events of 1974. It clarified that as far as it was concerned the Cyprus problem was a problem of invasion and occupation. With the adoption of UN resolutions, it set out the framework of the solution of the Cyprus problem. At the same time, the UN determined the procedure of the talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot community as the means for the solution of the Cyprus problem. Indeed, it set this procedure under its own aegis. Since then, efforts are being made for the peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem within the framework of the United Nations.

If the Greek Cypriot side were dogmatic and intransigent, as some circles are trying to project, it would have taken a different approach. However, realising that the given situation had totally changed after the coup d'état and invasion, it made a big compromise move. It accepted the solution of a bi-zonal bi-communal Federation as the framework for the reunification of the island. We accepted that the Republic of Cyprus would be composed of two constituent entities and that each entity would administer the corresponding geographical region. We accepted political equality, clarifying that it cannot be numerical equality. It was cleared up from the beginning that the solution must lead to a single state, with a single sovereignty, a single citizenship and a single international personality. We accepted that the solution must allay the concerns and respond to the feeling of security that must exist in both communities. Within this context, AKEL is ready to discuss everything and to study all possible proposals on the precondition that these shall be unifying and workable.

During the thirty-six years of the existence of the current phase of the Cyprus problem, many efforts have been undertaken for a solution to the problem. I could say a lot about the responsibilities all through these years. However, I consider that this is not what the pressing need is. The primary duty is: how we can arrive at an agreement that will be accepted by both communities? How can we solve the Cyprus problem?

Our position is that the effort underway will be very decisive for the fate of the Cyprus problem. It will affect, to a great extent, whether the problem will be solved or whether it will continue to regress, perpetuating the conflict and instability in the region. A possible non-solution of the problem would continue to render it an obstacle to the improvement of Turkey's relations with Greece, but also to its European perspective.

Moving on to elaborate some thoughts about how a solution could be achieved, I feel the need to clarify some issues.

Both the President of the Republic and AKEL consider that the solution to the Cyprus problem is the only option for our country and people. A potential perpetuation of the problem or the maintaining of the status quo for us represents a very negative development for the simple reason that such a development will not continue forever. On the contrary, at some point afterwards, there will be a gradual worsening with the possibility of sliding towards harrowing developments, for both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

However, despite such a possibility, it will not drive us towards accepting a solution that will be judged as contravening the well-intentioned interests of the Cypriot people as a whole.

It is important that those interested in or who have an interest from the solution of the problem realise this and bear this in mind.

I would like to clear up one more question. After the referenda of 2004, a fiercely negative view was created among certain circles concerning the real intentions of the Greek Cypriots with regards to the solution. The impression was cultivated that the Greek Cypriots were satisfied with the accession of Cyprus to the European Union and do not want a solution. Permit me to say that this is a wrong approach. This does not apply to the majority of the Greek Cypriots. The Greek Cypriots rejected the Annan Plan because they judged it as an unfair and unbalanced plan that did not take their concerns into account. We made it clear from the very beginning that the rejection of the Annan Plan did not mean the end of the road. For sure, it did not mean the rejection of the solution by the Greek Cypriots.

The majority of the Greek Cypriots do not reconcile and become adjusted neither with the division of the territory, nor of the Cypriot people. We want to convey this message to all directions, both AKEL and the President of the Republic, D. Christofias, are committed to the goal of achieving a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem. However, we insist that this solution must restore the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity of the country; that it will safeguard the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots. We are aiming at a solution that will reunify the island, the people, institutions and the economy. We are aiming at a solution that will be in line with the values and principles the European Union is based on. It is with this goal that D. Christofias

proceeded to commence direct negotiations with the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community on an agreed and clear basis, at least on a theoretical level.

The determination of President Christofias for a solution of the Cyprus problem has an unequivocally well-reasoned basis and we consider that this has been proved after more than two years of negotiations. It is clear for the President and for us that the non-solution of the Cyprus problem does not serve the interests of anyone: neither of the Greek Cypriots, nor the Turkish Cypriots nor of Turkey. The perpetuation of the current situation also aggravates the present and future of the Cypriot people. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots remain refugees in their own country. They cannot enjoy the benefits of a country that is developing all its possibilities. They are living every day with the troops warning them that the future will not ensure them peace and stability but the permanent threat of confrontation. We all know that to ensure development, progress and prosperity for the whole of the Cypriot people, both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, lasting peace, security and stability are demanded. This is what we are aiming for.

Turkey itself, I reiterate, will encounter obstacles in its accession course to the European Union due to the Cyprus problem. Both AKEL and President Christofias support the European orientation of Turkey. The accession of Turkey to the EU can influence in a catalytic way the solution of the Cyprus problem, and it can also benefit Turkey itself at all levels. However, this support cannot continue to be provided without Turkey fulfilling its obligations towards the European Union and the Republic of Cyprus. The position expressed by President Christofias in a recent interview to a Turkish newspaper is characteristic. In the interview, he reiterated that the Republic of Cyprus is not seeking to impede the European course of Turkey, nor to keep, without reason, the chapters for discussion frozen, on the precondition that Turkey itself will help itself.

On the part of Turkish officials and others, the view is projected in an intimidating way that if the accession course of the country does not proceed, Turkey will turn towards Asia and that this will damage Cyprus. We do not disagree that such a development will be negative. It will however primarily damage Turkey and the Turkish people who will lose the possibility of cooperation as an equal member within a Union of countries whose uniform activity offers many opportunities. This cooperation will greatly benefit Turkey to fulfil some of its goals. It is therefore unthinkable to be expected that we will yield to such blackmail.

Finally, it is self-evident that the solution of the Cyprus problem based on principles will safeguard permanent and lasting peace on the island and serve the interests of both Cyprus and Greece, Turkey and the European Union, given that it will promote stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and the wider region of the Middle East.

As I have already stressed, the determination and readiness of the President for a solution is given and evident. Dimitris Christofias is doing everything possible for the negotiations to move forward and register such progress that will enable us to reach an agreed solution. Under no circumstances do we harbour illusions about the difficulties we face in achieving the goal of the solution. Thirty-six years of division are a lot and have created many and complex problems. However, it is up to us to overcome the problems, suffice that there is mutual will and resolve. President Christofias has shown in practice that he wants this procedure to conclude with a solution of the Cyprus problem. He engages in the negotiations with sincerity and genuine will, without being restricted by negativity or meaningless rejectionist disposition.

President Christofias is submitting logical, realistic and feasible proposals in line with all that has been agreed and based on the Resolutions of the United Nations, International and European Law, and which also take into account the situation that has been created on the Island after 1974. He is tabling proposals that are aiming towards an agreed goal for a bi-zonal bi-communal federation, proposals that take into account the interests not only of the Greek Cypriots, but of the Turkish Cypriots as well, of the Cypriot people as a whole. In short, he is submitting proposals that provide solutions to the problems that the occupation and division have created, respecting at the same time the Resolutions of the United Nations. Some of the proposals he has tabled have led to a confrontation with other political parties, but this does not deter him. His proposal on the chapter on Governance represents a powerful and characteristic example. This proposal includes the safeguarding of the effective participation of Turkish Cypriots in the central federal government and in the state, together with a number of safety valves that safeguard political equality, as this has been set out by the texts of the United Nations. It foresees the participation of the Turkish Cypriots in decision-making, as well as the rotating Presidency. The provision for a weighted and cross vote creates the perspective for the two communities to cooperate with each other, something that restricts the possibility of a future confrontation between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Regretfully, there

was not the necessary positive response from the Turkish side to this proposal, nor was there a positive response to the package of three proposals the President submitted, aiming to give an impetus to the negotiation procedure and provide an incentive to the Turkish side to contribute constructively. The linking of the discussions on the property issue with the territorial issue and the chapter on immigration, the citizenship of aliens and asylum and the implementation by Turkey of Resolution 550 of the Security Council of 1984 regarding Famagusta represent an excellent opportunity that will permit the due mobility and significantly assist Turkey's accession course.

The Turkish side rejects all these proposals and initiatives by Christofias and counter-proposes positions that cannot be accepted by the Greek Cypriot side, certainly not by us or by D. Christofias.

We hear that regarding the issue of Famagusta the possibility is being discussed for some time now of inviting the inhabitants of the city to return to their homes under Turkish Cypriot administration. Such a proposal will not be accepted by the Greek Cypriot side, nor will it contribute to improving the climate. It contravenes the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. If we accept such a proposal, where do we stop?

The view is put forward for the fulfilment of part of Turkey's obligations towards the Republic of Cyprus, which stem from the Ankara Protocol and the Additional Protocol in exchange for the opening of the airport of Ercan. This is a protective shield that the Republic of Cyprus has so that we will not slide towards a bad solution is International Law and the decisions and resolutions of international organisations. Consequently, how is it expected from us that we should accept views that undermine them? How is it expected from us to make concessions for Turkey to implement the commitments it has undertaken towards the European Union?

The same also applies in relation to the proposal for the organisation of a four party or five party conference without the presence of the Republic of Cyprus. It is not because we attach more importance than necessary to formats, however, we are waging a struggle for survival. Within this framework, we are ready to proceed to compromises and accept proposals that will safeguard our goal. However, we will never accept proposals that will lead in another direction.

We call on the Turkish side to take the necessary steps so that substantive progress is recorded, however that must take into account all that I have said. Regarding the President of the Republic and AKEL, the determination and readiness for a solution of the Cyprus problem is given. I would not like, under any circumstances, to convey the message that our genuine concern for the reunification of our country entails the acceptance of any element that contravenes all that we have agreed upon and all that is foreseen by International Law. For us, it is self-evident that the solution will contain the element of compromise, compromise with our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, not with the suffering the occupation has accumulated in our country. That is why we insist on our long-standing position that the solution must be based on the resolutions of the Security Council of the UN and the High-Level Agreements. We insist that it will be a bi-zonal, bi-communal federal solution with political equality as set out by the United Nations, for a single state, with a single sovereignty, a single citizenship and a single international personality, that in a reunified Cyprus all the Cypriots must enjoy their rights and freedoms without restrictions and prohibitions.

This is our vision for Cyprus. We believe sincerely that we can make this vision a reality. We can base our efforts on all that has been agreed upon and work constructively and sincerely to overcome the obstacles. We believe we can succeed in freeing Cyprus from the curse of the past that kept its people chained to whatever foreign interests. Let us write the history of our future and change the bitter history of the past years. Exactly as Aphrodite had surfaced beautiful and free from the foamed waves thousands of years ago, choosing to bless our country with her myth, we too can deliver Cyprus from the turbulent sea of its sufferings and rejuvenate it into a free, reunified and peaceful Cyprus.

This I insist will help Turkey to promote its own goals too.

I thank you once again for the invitation and hospitality.

Challenges Ahead

Praxoula Antoniadou Kyriacou⁴⁰

Before proceeding to express the views of the United Democrats, I have to clarify that our views are based mostly on information published in the press and our own studies and contacts, since the United Democrats are rarely briefed officially on the progress of the negotiation process. Personally, I had the opportunity to participate in the deliberations of the working group on the economy in the early stages of the negotiation process that started in March 2008, but I am no longer a part of the process.

The United Democrats are convinced that one of the major challenges ahead, and certainly a factor that has led to the deterioration of the situation on the ground, is time.

We are convinced that the progress of time is driving the situation from a potentially win-win outcome to a lose-lose outcome for all parties concerned.

It is a known axiom of management that if you do nothing, things will take the worst possible direction. And with regard to Cyprus we have allowed the passage of time to transform a bad situation to an even worse one.

These include demographic changes, property right issues, economic recession, increasing financial injections by Turkey into the North, social desperation and near unrest, even growth of xenophobia and racism.

This is not to mention the vast amounts being spent in defence by all of Turkey, Greece and Cyprus, at a time when this money could be used to drive the countries out of economic recession and lead them to economic prosperity.

There is no money to be made in partition, nor in keeping Turkey outside the European Union. Instead, there is profit to be made out of peace and cooperation between all countries in the area, as it has also been quantified by the studies of the Three Ladies on the Day After⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Praxoula Antoniadou Kyriacou is the President of the United Democrats.

⁴¹ The reports were published by PRIO, the Norwegian Peace and Research Institute. The authors, Özlem Oğuz Çilsal, Fiona Mullen and Praxoula Antoniadou Kyriacou received a Stelios Award for Business Co-operation in Cyprus.

In their reports⁴², the Three Ladies illustrate that a peace dividend of 12000 euro per family per year awaits the Cypriots once their country reunifies, or 33,000 new jobs await the unemployed, on the basis of an additional growth of three percentage points per year arising out of the new economic opportunities that would be unleashed with the unification of Cyprus. Furthermore, a minimum peace dividend of 17 billion euro per year awaits Turkey⁴³ after a peaceful solution that unites the island, while Greece also stands to gain significantly.

The Day After studies are based on an opportunity cost (of non-peace) approach and mirror the positive results on the economies of Turkey and Greece of political rapprochement initiated between Greece and Turkey in 1999 by the then respective Ministers of Foreign affairs, George Papandreou and Ismail Cem.

When political relations between the whole of Cyprus and Turkey normalise - following a peaceful and agreed upon unification of the island - then economic relations between the two countries (and with Greece) will thrive, to the benefit of all the peoples of the area.

⁴² Mullen, F., Oğuz, O., & Kyriacou, P. A. (2008). *The Day After: Commercial Opportunities Following a Solution to the Cyprus Problem*. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Center. Retrieved from <http://www.prio.no/upload/Report-The%20day%20after.pdf>, February 10, 2011.

Mullen, F., Oğuz, O., & Kyriacou, P. A. (2009). *The Day After II: Reconstructing a Reunited Cyprus*. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Center. Retrieved from <http://www.prio.no/upload/The%20day%20after-2%20ENG-web.pdf>, February 10, 2011.

Mullen, F., Oğuz, O., & Kyriacou, P. A. (2010). *The Day After III: The Cyprus Peace Dividend for Turkey and Greece*. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Center. Retrieved from <http://www.prio.no/upload/The%20day%20after%20III.pdf>, February 10, 2011.

⁴³ As analysed in the Table that follows.

Peace Dividend for Turkey

Additional annual flows	EUR billion
Tourism	1,6
Transportation	1,7
Financial and business services	7,0
Export of goods (0,2 billion EUR in addition freight revenue / 10%: proportion of freight income to value of exports)	2,0
Total additional gross revenue	12,3
Total Savings (Compensation, budgetary, military)	5,1
Total peace dividend for Turkey, per year	17,4
Additional FDI, per year	33,0

And to link the dimension of time to the economy, we all know that time is money; and it is obvious that we are all losing money here. In other words there is a substantial opportunity cost of non-peace.

So if we are all losing money, what is keeping us back?

Fear of loss of identity is keeping the Cypriots away from a solution even if this may bring economic benefits. But then it should be illustrated that communal identity is at greater risk with the continued degeneration of the status quo in Cyprus than with the agreed form of a solution, as was agreed upon by the leaders of the two communities in their 23rd May and 1st July 2008 agreements.

Furthermore, helping people identify with a broader identity, that of people of the Eastern Mediterranean, the threshold of Europe to Asia and of Asia to Europe will allow people to feel safer with each other and see the benefits that will accrue to all once the area acts in cooperation rather than in discord.

Concerning the essence of the compromise being sought, it is obvious to the United Democrats that this effectively has to do with participation versus land: more participation for the Turkish Cypriots in the government of the bi-zonal,

bi-communal federation than what was provided by the 1960 constitution, and more land for the Greek Cypriots than the current arrangement.

The United Democrats are convinced that sufficient progress has been made in the talks concerning the attainment of satisfactory participation by the Turkish Cypriots, on the basis of political equality as this is defined in relevant UN resolutions. This is why opponents of the solution vehemently criticise President Christofias for the agreements so far reached.

We however need to emphasise that this has to be reciprocated if further progress is to be achieved. We consider ourselves to be the most fervent proponents of a solution in Cyprus, at least in the South. But there is no way that we can see the Greek Cypriots agreeing to a solution that does not include the return of land.

Concerning thoughts made by technical experts concerning “urban transformation” as a way to raise money for the payment of compensations, we consider this to be highly counterproductive.

Politicians, as opposed to technocrats, should be aware that our primary objective is to attain an agreement that will be acceptable by the people. If this becomes possible, then financing will avail itself.⁴⁴ Individual property rights should not be compromised beyond the extent needed for bi-zonality, through recourse to the need to raise finance.

If we kill the core of whatever is left of the YES vote by signing away individual property rights all over Cyprus – e.g., the property rights of Turkish Cypriots in Larnaca or of Greek Cypriots in Varosha - then the agreement attained will not be for the people but for the technocrats that will be managing the people’s properties. And it will fail. It will be the final blow to human rights in the whole of Cyprus jointly executed by the technocrats of all sides involved, including the technocrats of the United Nations.

Furthermore, if all involved are sincere about attaining an agreed solution, i.e., if there is a common target, we should all concentrate on attaining the common target about the future, rather than trying to interpret the current status quo.

⁴⁴ As it did in 2004, but UN experts didn’t want to listen as they were satisfied with what Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot technocrats were telling them, rather than with what politicians of the yes camp were desperately trying to convey.

Proposal by the United Democrats

The United Democrats propose, in order to facilitate the prompt attainment of a comprehensive agreement on the reunification of Cyprus and to enable the accession process of Turkey to proceed further, that the city of Varosha be returned to its original inhabitants and the port of Famagusta and the airport of Ercan be opened and placed under European Union auspices. At the same time, Turkey opens one major port and one major airport to Cyprus.

In this way, substantial movement on the ground will be created, enabling Cypriots to regain confidence in the prospect of a solution that will yield benefits to all concerned. At the same time, Turkey will be able to proceed substantially with its accession process to the European Union, since those chapters that now remain closed because of the non-implementation of the Ankara Protocol will open for negotiations.

Concerning short term political party considerations, I doubt that any of today's ruling parties in the area will be able to hold on to power if by the end of their current mandate Cyprus is nearer to partition and Turkey further away from its EU aspirations.

Public opinion will eventually punish leaders, not for daring to take people beyond what they could imagine, but for perpetuating their misery and their blindness, in fear of assuming responsibility. And then people will seek something different. And difference is not expressed only in terms of formal political opposition but also in terms of more extreme forms, as we are all recently witnessing.

Leaders have unfortunately become captive of a negative public opinion, which they have either helped themselves to create or did nothing to change. But as the Secretary General of the UN emphasizes in his recent report on Cyprus, "it is incumbent on the leaders to reverse the cycle of negative messaging".

And we need to build trust between the leaders themselves in this equation. Not just between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot leaders but also between the Cypriot leaders and the leaders of Turkey and Greece.

Leaders have to develop a true and not an assumed understanding about what is important for the other leader. And this of course cannot be developed through reading newspapers, at a distance.

It has to be developed through direct communication – in one or the other way.

So that when one leader takes a positive step, this would not be immediately dismissed as a communication trick. And so that when a leader contemplates making a gesture, he can trust that he will be positively reciprocated by the other leader and not remain exposed. This is indeed very important if we are to move forward.

The United Democrats consider that the Heybeliada Talks have contributed significantly in this direction by providing direct avenues of communication between Cyprus and Turkey where such avenues were effectively absent before. For there can be no agreement without dialogue and there can be no dialogue without direct communication.

We would hence wish to express our deep appreciation to GPoT Center, Friedrich Naumann Foundation and the Open Society Foundation of Turkey for organizing and financing these series of meetings. Special thanks go of course to Mensur Akgün, Sylvia Tiryaki and certainly Jörg Dehnert for investing personal time and effort in the pursuit of peace.

The Desperate Cry of Turkish Cypriot Civil Society: Is Anybody Heeding in Ankara?

Yiorgchos Leventis⁴⁵

Writing a new analysis on the current state of affairs with regard to the never ending saga of the deep-frozen conflict in Cyprus can be an equally unrewarding task for commentators, political analysts, academics and the like. Over the decades, endless rounds of talks have failed to transcend the negotiated settlement process into a happy conclusion. The frustrated spectator wonders: in the grand scheme of things what is *new* on the Cyprus front? What *is* worth commenting on and on which aspect could a concerned citizen express a thoughtful opinion beyond the tedious reports on the “*nth* meeting of the two community leaders”?

Having passed the twentieth anniversary of my continuous uninterrupted pre-occupation with the history and the current state of affairs with regard to the “Cyprob,” I occasionally feel that what has to be said has already been said; there is no point going through the same ground time and again. As time goes by, as intermediaries, go-in-betweens, UN special representatives and US/UK/EU special envoys come and go without much success - though not total failure as they do leave behind *the body of work* to be used in the next *nth* round of bi-communal talks - to write a meaningful results-oriented point of view on the current state of bi-communal public affairs in Cyprus can be a daunting task!

Nevertheless, life on the island has to move on, especially in the northern part, which has been assigned to a limbo condition after the Turkish military intervention of 1974. Thirty years later the accession of the Republic of Cyprus into the EU, accompanied by the suspension of the implementation of the European *acquis* in the Turkish-controlled part, only served to prolong the undecided state of the northern 36 percent of Cypriot land. (Lest we forget another 3 per cent is mostly unused fertile land forming the buffer zone).

Naturally, such a state of affairs has been disadvantageous for the Turkish Cypriots. Today, more than ever, there is among them a growing concern if not outright ire with the continuous meddling and heavy-handed manner with

⁴⁵ Yiorgchos Leventis is the Director of the International Security Forum.

which successive Turkish governments intervene in the internal affairs of Cyprus, perhaps unwillingly, however pragmatically destroying the fabric of the indigenous Turkish Cypriot community.

Statements calling on Ankara to restrain the influx of penniless hordes from the Turkish mainland emanate now from no less a dominant historical political figure than Rauf Denktaş, the veteran Turkish Cypriot leader and arch-architect of the 1983 UDI. With the advent of the New Year, Denktaş reportedly called for a census in the self-styled “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”. Bygone are now the days when Denktaş - while in power - would dismiss the opposition’s criticism about the unchecked influx of settlers compounded by the departure of Turkish Cypriots in his typically unconcerned offhand manner: “one Turk goes another comes”. Now both he and his son Serdar bring home the point “enough is enough” with Ankara’s Cyprus policies.

A sharp-eyed observer cannot fail to note that the flagrant manipulation of the Turkish Cypriot society by Erdoğan’s administration is equally severely criticized by Turkish Cypriot civil society/trade union leaders. Below is the statement of *Sener Elcil, Secretary General of the Union of Turkish Cypriot Teachers (KTOS) entitled “Mr. Erdoğan’s Statements reveal the real goals of Turkey in Cyprus.”*⁴⁶ *I cite it in its entirety, as it is short and eloquent. It is a clear reflection of the immense frustration and huge disappointment and ire against Turkish policies felt in the Turkish Cypriot civil society conscience:*

“We follow with particular interest the evaluation by the Turkish Prime Minister Mr. Erdoğan, of the visit to our island by the German Chancellor Mrs. Merkel.

Mr. Erdoğan’s statements reveal the real goals of Turkey in Cyprus. Mr. Erdoğan behaves as if it were not the Government of the Party of Justice and Development and the Turkish state which annihilate the Turkish Cypriot community, a partner on an equal footing in the Republic of Cyprus. As if it were not Turkey which is transferring population and neutralize our political will, imposing the so-called economic packages and force us to immigrate. As if it were not them who built mosques in every corner, assimilating the Turkish Cypriots.

⁴⁶ Mr. Erdoğan’s Statements Reveal the Real Goals of Turkey in Cyprus. (2011). *Agora Dialogue*. Retrieved from <http://agora-dialogue.com/?p=17174#comments%29>, February 1, 2011.

Striving to appear as the side that wants solution and asking Mrs. Merkel to apologize because she has referred to these realities constitutes a political distortion. We remind Mr. Erdoğan that Turkey is a guarantor of the Republic of Cyprus together with Greece and Britain. Supposedly Turkey is in Cyprus to protect the territorial integrity and the constitutional order of the Republic of Cyprus. Mr. Erdoğan should know that the transfer of population, the creation of dividing structures, the distribution of Greek Cypriot properties to Turkish nationals and all that Turkey has done in Cyprus contravene International Law and are not included in its duties as a guarantor.

Your outburst against Mrs. Merkel, who reminded you of all these, as well as your accusation that she lacks knowledge on the Cyprus Problem, cannot cover these realities. How easy you have forgotten that it is you who “slept” on the 65% of the Yes vote by the Turkish Cypriots at the referendum and without making a step forward towards a solution, you revealed your real goals by stating that “we did not give away a single stone”.

Once more you revealed your real goal by saying that you will not give away a single gram of north Cyprus, forgetting, however, that the real owner of this land are all the Cypriots. With what right are you bargaining with our land? Cyprus is not the property of your fathers.

It should be made clear that if there is somebody who should apologize for his actions which push the Turkish Cypriots to immigration and to assimilation, this is you.”

Hard Questions

Ironically, the colonization of the northern part of Cyprus with the unemployed and the low-educated from “motherland” Turkey is reaching immense proportions at a time when the government of the Republic of Cyprus has met almost all applications of indigenous Turkish Cypriots granting 80,000 Republic of Cyprus identity cards and 58,000 passports.

Are those who argue we have arrived at the stage of a truly multi-cultural EU member-state in the South and the verge of a pure Turkish protectorate in the North lunatics? Is it not the aim of our common Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot struggle to stave off Ankara’s expansionism and endless meddling in Cypriot affairs? If we fail, we are doomed to surrender control of our beautiful common island to the Erdoğan-Davutoğlu duo, aren’t we Mr. Denktaş?

Press Scan: Heybeliada Talks in the Media

What Did Erdoğan Convey at the Private Meeting?

By Aysu Basri | Yeni Düzen | March 1, 2010

The most important leg of the Cyprus meeting organized by GPoT was undoubtedly the meeting of Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with the group of Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Especially significant was that a Turkish Prime Minister was addressing Greek Cypriots for the first time ever.

Erdoğan received the group in his Office of the Prime Minister at the Dolmabahçe Palace. (...) He invited the group around a long table set in the large meeting room of his office; the seating arrangement obviously done with care, with the balance between the journalists in mind.

Guarantees

Erdoğan's written speech, which was simultaneously translated, started off a little tense. He specifically spoke about very actively supporting the negotiation process in Cyprus, and pointed to how Talat, too, was continuing negotiations despite entering the election process. I asked PM Erdoğan if Turkey will be insistent on guarantees. He said "There is no question about us making concessions on guarantees. Guarantees are earned rights. That is why we say the decision taken by the Parliament in the South is wrong and non-binding." I also asked him whether, as one of the guarantor countries, Turkey might do something to ease the tension at the table in the face of maximalist attitudes from both sides creating tension, to which he replied "I will be meeting with Papandreou in Athens in the coming days. We will be talking about these issues there as well. We do not want to clog the process but to overcome any clogging."

“Greek Cyprus is EU’s Spoiled Child”

Erdoğan, who addressed the Greek Cypriot press directly, asked for accurate information in the media as a means of adding to the solution. He went on to say that “Greek Cyprus is like the EU’s spoiled child, and finds more room for indulgence. For instance, in our negotiations, when France has blocked six chapters, Cyprus has stood against twelve. These are entirely political acts, because we are doing our part in the EU negotiations. For instance, we have completed all requirements in chapters about education and environment. We have installed Nabucco, but we can’t open a chapter even when everything is in place in terms of energy. Even that stumbles on Southern Cyprus. In fact Cyprus should not have been accepted into the EU, but that process is done. We should just work to compensate for this injustice now. We want to make Cyprus as island of peace.”

In fact, the historical picture Erdoğan has been presenting or his answers to these questions have not changed since the AKP first came into power. It is certainly not something the Turkish side doesn’t know or hasn’t heard before. However, Erdoğan’s references to the historical process do matter to the Greek Cypriot press. Specifically, Erdoğan’s critique of RoC’s attitude towards Turkey’s EU membership process will not be welcomed by them. But he still does not shy away from keeping his messages and criticisms open. He says “We have been experiencing all this but nobody should doubt our desire for a solution and our goodwill.”

Erdoğan and Atatürk

Makarios Drusiotis, one of the journalists attending the meeting, refers to Erdoğan’s address as “the most impressive speech in my career as a journalist.” Branding his words “the (most important) briefing of the last 20 years, our colleagues offer another analysis: “Just as Atatürk transformed Turkish politics in 1920s, Erdoğan created a new dynamic with the changes he introduced both in Turkey and the region.” Likening Erdoğan to Atatürk’s politics and leadership and reading this parallel through Erdoğan’s changes in regional politics is quite interesting. That this analogy was made by Greek Cypriot journalists and opinion-makers makes it even more interesting.

Beyond this, saying that Erdoğan did not hesitate to express what not everyone would have liked to hear, Stefanos Evripidou added “whether we like his statements or not, Erdoğan is very convincing.” The truth is that Erdoğan appears to have sent convincing messages regarding his determination for a solution in Cyprus and evoked respect for his call to “work together for a solution.”

In any case, by coming together with Greek Cypriot journalists for the first time ever, Erdoğan stepped over a crucial threshold. It is vital that this is continued in the future.

Especially in the Southern part of Cyprus, politics is analyzed through indirect translations and information deformed by an official language; it is highly valuable to take a step towards overcoming this situation. I hope the Greek Prime Minister and Christofias also become aware of this and make more efforts to ensure direct communication.

Solution is the goal

The Turkish PM stated that his goal is to continue with policies of solution in Cyprus and stressed the importance of negotiations to continue without interruptions and the Turkish Cypriot side to appear constructive. He specifically stressed that a Cypriot solution is his primary preference.

While the Turkish PM was meeting with us, the AKP government was busy with the discussions about highest level of military-arrests in the history of the Turkish Republic. Erdoğan, however, despite having an extremely busy schedule in Ankara, set aside about two hours to address journalists on the Cyprus issue. He listened to the criticisms of Greek Cypriot journalists with cool head and listened to their sensitivities.

Erdoğan also stressed the financial aspect of the conflict and the arms race by saying “the world is spending a trillion dollars on the defense industry. Think about the defense savings a solution in Cyprus could bring”

Egemen Bağış

The group also met with State Minister and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış in a very warm and sincere environment at the EU General Secretariat office in Ortaköy. We will also continue tomorrow with his statements.

Bağış stressed the importance of Turkey's EU accession process. The repeatedly underlined question, on the other hand, was why the seaports were not opened by Turkey. Saying the opening of the ports is not possible unless it's a mutual gesture, Bağış noted cooperation could start with a plane landing in Ercan Airport or a ship carrying oranges coming to Magusa. Another question directed at Bağış was about the insistence of the Turkish Army to remain on EU soil. The answer was simple, and interesting for the journalists: "If RoC had also accepted the Annan Plan, the number of Turkish soldiers on the island had long been at a minimum by now."

Erdoğan: Don't Doubt Our Sincerity

By Stefanos Evripidou | Cyprus Mail | March 2, 2010

Turkey has no hidden agenda behind efforts to reunite the island, said Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to a group of Cypriot journalists in Istanbul, adding that Greek Cypriots needed to overcome their mistrust of Turkey and help work towards building a region of peace and cooperation.

“Our goal is to achieve a lasting comprehensive settlement to the problem in Cyprus. We are ready to do our share to achieve that goal, and no one should or can doubt Turkey’s sincerity,” he said.

For the first time since the conflict began decades ago, a Turkish prime minister directly addressed an audience of Cypriot journalists and politicians from both sides of the divide at Erdoğan’s palace offices in Istanbul at the weekend

“We will respect a solution that will be found through the free will of the two sides and we will fulfill whatever we need to fulfill in achieving that result,” he told journalists from three Greek Cypriot newspapers, including the Cyprus Mail, and two Turkish Cypriot ones.

As part of efforts to open dialogue with the Greek Cypriot leadership and public, the Turkish premier sought to quash speculation that Turkey would fail to implement an agreed solution between the two sides, saying that Turkey supports “wholeheartedly and with sincerity” a solution based on the framework agreed between the two leaders on May 23, 2008. He referred specifically to a bizonal, bicomunal federation as defined by relevant UN resolutions, with political equality and a single international identity.

Erdoğan spoke of the lack of trust and understanding between the various sides involved in the conflict. He argued that while his government was always one step ahead in making efforts to solve the problem, Greek Cypriots were lagging way behind. He noted that the Justice and Development Party (AKP) started working immediately to bring an end to the conflict once in power by encouraging former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to launch peace talks.

Erdoğan highlighted that in 2004 he had called on the Turkish Cypriots to support the Annan plan, because he believed it was a win-win situation. “In

Turkey, the main opposition party and other opposition parties criticised us heavily, insulted us even. They said we were selling off Cyprus, so we faced a lot of criticism.”

Despite its subsequent rejection by Greek Cypriots, he said he would continue to maintain a “constructive position” on a solution.

“As the government for the last seven and a half years, we have been showing this understanding approach not just for a solution of the problem but also from the point of the view of the Greek Cypriots. It was my government that facilitated the trips of Greek Cypriots to Turkey (in 2004),” he said.

Referring to the Turkish side’s package of proposals on governance and power sharing submitted in January to the negotiating table, Erdoğan highlighted the level of suspicion tainting progress in the talks.

“I see on the Greek Cypriot side some question marks or doubts about what is behind this package. Whereas what we have to be doing is thinking not just about one part of the island, not only about the north of the island but the north and south of the island.”

Erdoğan maintained that there were no hidden agendas in his push for peace. “I’ve been known to be very frank and open, in other words, I don’t have hidden agendas. I’m against hidden agendas. Everything should be out in the open, because if you exercise politics that way, then you can have a very sincere exchange with people.”

He said Turkey acknowledged that Greek Cypriots were the majority on the island, and simply wanted political not numerical equality for the Turkish Cypriots.

“We only we say what we think should be there, an equal footing, that’s it and we say it. We’re not talking about an equal number of ministers. The number of ministers from the Greek Cypriot side will be more. So we say two constituent states, which is only natural. We say a federal structure which is very expected. Population wise, there are more Greek Cypriots on the island, so those are all facts.

“With respect to the withdrawal of troops, we’ve spoken about this before. Over a period of time, we’ve said before that those troops can be withdrawn,” the Turkish leader said, adding that his government would not respond to calls for immediate troop withdrawal.

“We have to really work for peace, to have two constituent states on equal political footing, a federal state, then let’s do it. What is it that we cannot share? We have to build our future on that common understanding. Our government presents a great opportunity to solve this problem and the Greek Cypriot government must well understand this opportunity. What is it that we cannot share?” he asked.

Erdoğan slammed the resolution recently passed in parliament on guarantor rights, saying it was a blow to the process and not a positive approach.

“Internal domestic problems cannot constitute an excuse for the actions of the Greek Cypriot side,” said Erdoğan, who called on President Demetris Christofias to “show the necessary leadership and not slow down the process so that a solution can be found”.

The Turkish premier said he was aware that Christofias’ positions are criticised by certain newspapers. “We would not like to see some excuses cast a shadow over this process because the goal at the end of the day is to reach a comprehensive settlement, and I believe that if the necessary strong determination and will is presented then we can achieve a fair and lasting result in as short a time as possible,” he said.

“If Cyprus becomes an island of peace and stability then we will have fulfilled the responsibility not only for the current time but also it’s the responsibility we have towards the future generations,” he added.

Speaking to the Cypriot journalists, Erdoğan argued that while the media may have an excuse for being cynical as a result of their profession, the people do not. “The people in the north and in the south should have enough confidence to be able to look at things directly in the eye and they should not be worried about these issues,” he said, referring to the framework of a solution. Then they would “be able to take this process forward”.

The Turkish PM quoted a Turkish saying on the media: “But you have a struggle too against those deceiving pens who do not write the truth. You too have something to struggle against because there are times when the media can take you to the top of the world or to the bottom of hell.”

Erdoğan also called on Cypriots not to believe all rumours and speculation heard regarding Turkey’s motives. “You should not believe in words being spread out here and there because that leads to misunderstanding. It leads to intolerance on all sides.

“We have a saying in Turkish: a mad man throws one little stone into the deep well, and no clever person is able to bring it out again. It’s that complicated and so we have to make sure that we don’t fall into that trap.”

Asked by a Greek Cypriot journalist when the window of opportunity for a solution would close, he replied: “We would not want to be closing that window of opportunity, this is not something we desire, but how long can we be patient.

“The way you calculate time is different than us. I have the worry beads that Mr Costas Karamanlis had given me as a present and I know that the number of beads are different. You have 21, we have 33 so the number of beads we count for patience are different but we will continue to count them anyway.”

Erdoğan welcomed the election of Georgios Papandreou in Greece, saying that he “trusted” him. He called on all Cypriots and the guarantor powers, Greece and Turkey, to put the past behind them and work towards ending the long-standing conflict in the region.

“It is important that the problem is solved on the island and we hope that the eastern Mediterranean will be an area of cooperation and peace which will be beneficial for everyone,” he said.

“What happened has happened in the past, we should leave it there. We have to look at the future and how we build the future. If Turkey and Greece for example were to engage in an arms race, would that take us to peace? That would take Greece into an economic crisis.”

Noting that \$1 trillion per year was spent on arms in the world, Erdoğan called for an investment “in friendship and brotherhood”, noting that nobody would have believed 10 years ago that Karamanlis would be a witness at his daughter’s wedding.

“So what I’m saying now is that we should go beyond this. We should not just stay where we are, we should keep moving forward. We should not be after small calculations. We really have to keep moving forward. We have to overcome difficulties, we’ve covered a lot of distance, but we need to cover more.”

The PM accused the Greek Cypriots of “in a manner of speaking acting as if they are the spoilt child of the EU and they feel like they can afford to do that” referring to the Republic’s decision to block more chapters in Turkey’s EU accession bid, particularly the ‘education’ and ‘energy’ chapter.

Erdoğan repeated his call for four-party talks with the leaders of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Greece and Turkey, adding that Spain, holding the EU Presidency could also be present, as a way of getting all the sides talking together to speed up the peace process.

An hour and a half after the meeting began, 30 minutes over schedule, Erdoğan looked visibly more relaxed among his Cypriot audience. Speaking of the Cyprus problem, he ended on this note: “We’ll do it together, thank you very much.”

Erdoğan: We May Withdraw Our Soldiers from Cyprus

Yeni Şafak | March 2, 2010

Prime Minister Erdoğan said if ongoing negotiations in Cyprus conclude positively, Turkey might withdraw the soldiers on the island.

The interview Prime Minister Erdoğan gave to Turkish and Greek Cypriot journalists on the weekend appeared in newspapers today. The media quoted Erdoğan's statement "Our goal is lasting and comprehensive peace in Cyprus. We will do our part towards this goal. Nobody should question Turkey's determination." Erdoğan noted that in the event of a settlement, the troops will be withdrawn not immediately but gradually. According to the news in the Northern Cypriot press, Erdoğan also criticized the Greek Cypriot Parliament on their decision on the guarantees. Erdoğan said, "The decision unanimously taken up by the Greek Cypriot Parliament on February 18, despite it not even being on the agenda of negotiations, is anachronistic and has damaged the solution process. It is difficult to comprehend. This decision mainly ignores the fact that the 1960 agreements were multilateral, addressing the entire island, and with an international character, while also ignoring that Turkish Cypriots see the guarantees as indispensable."

Turkey in the EU Would Calm Fears on Both Sides

By Stefanos Evripidou | Cyprus Mail | March 3, 2010

Turkey's EU accession will be the "golden formula" that automatically resolves all the fears and suspicions held by both communities on the island, Turkey's EU chief negotiator Egemen Bağış said.

Speaking to a group of Cypriot journalists in Istanbul at the weekend, the Turkish Minister for EU Affairs said it was in the common interest of all Cypriots to work towards a "grand solution" for the region and ensure Turkey joined the EU.

"If I was a Cypriot myself, and I don't care about Turkish or Greek, I think Cypriots have a common interest, I would be working to ensure Turkey's membership to the EU, more than Turkey's chief negotiator," said Bağış.

The minister addressed the group of Greek and Turkish Cypriot journalists before they were invited to spend an hour and a half with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the weekend.

"At the end of the day, the golden formula, the great solution is Turkey's membership to the EU. That automatically resolves all the worries, all the suspicions, all the concerns, all the questions, all the fears.

"We have to admit there are fears on both sides. And the day Turkey becomes a member we will be living in the same zone, all of us. It's time to realise our common interests," he said.

Bağış noted that many countries were hiding behind Cyprus to hinder Turkey's EU process. "It's not because they love Cypriots. It's because they don't want a new member country to have more seats in the (European) parliament than some of the founding EU members."

He noted that some countries didn't want the sixth largest economy of Europe to have a greater say in the EU's budget-making process. "And some of the countries enjoy selling different defence equipments both to Greece and to Turkey," he added.

The American-educated Turkish official said both countries would save so much if they decided simultaneously not to spend so much on defence.

“Greece buys submarines, Turkey buys submarines. Turkey buys tanks, Greece buys tanks, we’re always spending. I’d rather build new schools, buy more computers for our children, new roads, airports, hospitals, that’s what our people need. Its time to wake up,” he said.

Bağış said that common benefits united Cyprus, Greece and Turkey. “Our interests are much greater than our differences. I think a (Cyprus) solution is pushing Turkey to the EU sooner than later. That’s a grand solution.”

He highlighted that Turkey would support any solution accepted by the majority in both communities on the island: “I’ve said this many times, any solution that President (Mehmet Ali) Talat and President (Demetris) Christofias can come up with and convince their respective communities will have Turkey’s full blessing and support. As long as it is based on political equality, as long as Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots accept the solution, Turkey will be there.

“If that solution involves withdrawing our troops, we will withdraw our troops.”

Giving the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community the title of president is not a new policy for Turkey but recognising Christofias as president of the Republic of Cyprus is.

“I called them both president because they are both elected. They’re not governors appointed by Greece and Turkey, they’re elected by their own people. That’s why we have to treat them equal.”

The EU minister said he was hopeful for a breakthrough in the talks by April when Talat faces elections. If Talat loses, Bağış gave assurances that he would personally pressure Dervis Eroğlu, a hot contender for the Turkish Cypriot leadership, to continue the talks.

However, Christofias and Talat didn’t need to learn anything more about the Cyprus problem, they just had to accept that both sides would feel a pinch by any compromise.

“They already know all the details, they both know what they can do and cannot do, what’s accepted by their community and what’s not, and they know each other’s points very well. They have to push and in order for a solution to come about, to merge, it has to hurt both sides a little bit. Both sides have to have a little awkward feeling.

“That was the Annan plan. You think we supported it because it was great, no it was difficult. Go ask the Turkish opposition. They called us traitors for having supported it.”

Bağış noted that giving the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan the right to fill in the blanks of the Annan plan where the sides could not agree “was the grandest reform in the history of Turkish foreign policy, after Turkey’s decision to join NATO”.

It was the first time Turkey was willing to give up a very important decision-making process to a third party on such a delicate issue, he said.

“But it was fair and balanced, give the guy (Annan) credit, he tried his best. And we lost a great chance. Now we have another chance. If we lose it, I don’t know how long it would take for us to have another effort.”

The minister acknowledged that both leaders wanted a solution but that other forces in both communities were working against it.

“The problem and the solution are both on the island. The two leaders both want a solution. The two prime ministers of the guarantor countries also want a solution. The two leaders know what the problems are and who was blocking the solution.”

In a subtle nod to Talat’s candidacy, he said Eroğlu would continue talks if he won the elections but “for him to come to the same knowledge, experience and trust with Christofias will take time”.

“By the time Eroğlu is ready to really move, then there will be another election on the southern side, and then we will wait probably for another leader to get to know the issue. So that’s going to make us lose a lot of time.”

On a final note, Bağış said Turkey had no problem with the basis of a solution as already agreed by the two leaders. “I’m saying let’s put this grand philosophy into some real, concrete plan. So how does a bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality really function? Give us the details.

“And that’s why I don’t think neither Talat nor Christofias or Denktaş or Eroğlu or Kyprianou or Hussein or whoever need to learn anymore. They all spent a whole life. They know each and every stone on the island. Let’s put this into a plan. And take it to a vote. Let’s get it over with.”

If the Solution in Cyprus Requires Withdrawing the Troops, We Will Withdraw the Troops

Yeni Volkan Gazetesi | March 4, 2010

Following Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkish State Minister and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış's meeting with Greek Cypriot journalists in Istanbul was widely covered in the Cypriot press.

The meeting, organized by Istanbul Kültür University's Global Political Trends Center, was attended by Greek Cypriot journalists Makarios Drusiotis (Politis), Katherina İliadi (Alithia) and Stefanos Evripidu (Cyprus Mail), as well as Turkish Cypriot journalists.

Withdrawal of troops

According to the news published in Politis yesterday, Turkish State Minister and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış said "if the solution in Cyprus requires a withdrawal of troops, then Turkey will withdraw the troops." Asked about the role of the soldiers in the event of a solution to the Cyprus problem, Bağış reminded that Turkey accepted the Annan Plan at Bürgenstock, which put down the number of Turkish soldiers to 650 and Greek soldiers to 950. Adding that a representative of the Naval Forces, who was supported by his superiors, was among the Turkish delegation at Bürgenstock, Bağış said the Turkish Army had accepted the Annan Plan despite all difficulties. According to the article, Bağış also noted that "had it been accepted, it would have now been possible, on the 5th anniversary of the Annan Plan, to hold a referendum to bring the number of soldiers on the island to zero." He added that Turkey does not foresee a new referendum on withdrawal and that this is something that can happen with the consent of all involved parties.

"The golden formula is Turkey's EU membership"

Stating that the security problem in Cyprus will disappear with Turkey's EU membership, Bağış said that both sides have certain fears. He said that if he was a Cypriot, whether Turkish or Greek, he "would work for Turkey's EU membership more than Turkey's Chief Negotiator himself." Turkey's membership was called the "golden formula" as this is seen as the option to nullify all anxieties, fears and

suspicions. Calling for a recognition of common interests, especially in the event of Turkey's EU acceptance, Bağış noted that his ministry is working for not only to improve relations between Turkey and the EU, but also Turkey and Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, and between the peoples of these countries. Bağış said he is optimistic despite the ticking clock, and that the opportunity exists right now thanks to pro-solution leaders in Ankara, Athens and Cyprus.

The Cyprus problem is being manipulated

The article referred to Bağış as saying the Cyprus problem is being manipulated by some countries opposing Turkey's EU membership, who are hiding behind Cyprus to impede Turkey, not out of their "love for Cyprus", but in order to prevent a new member country from acquiring too many seats in the European Parliament. Touching also upon Greece and Turkey's military spending, Bağış said "think about how much all of Turkey, Greece and Cyprus will save if the former two countries simultaneously decide not to overspend on defense. When Greece buys a submarine, Turkey buys a submarine. When Greece buys a plane, so does Turkey. When Turkey buys a tank, so does Greece. All this is being spent on armature. It would be better to set aside this spending for new schools, new computers for our children, to build new roads, airports, hospitals. These are the things our people need. It is time to wake up."

[...]

The reason Erdoğan does not meet with Christofias

Asked about the reason Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan does not meet with the President of the Greek Cyprus Dimistris Christofias, Bağış said, "when the sun rises on that beautiful island every morning, it rises on two different governments headed by two different presidents, two different democracies, two different parliaments, two different educational systems. This is the reality." Bağış said he was referring to two presidents because both were elected into office; "These are elected leaders. They were not appointed by Greece or Turkey; they were chosen by their people. That is why they need to be treated equally."

Reflections in Alithia

According to Alithia, Bağış defined Turkey's acceptance of the Annan Plan as the biggest formulation in the history of Turkish foreign policy after Turkey's decision to join NATO. With respect to the Ankara Protocol, Bağış reiterated that if the EU keeps its promise on direct trade, Turkey will be happy to open its sea and airports to Greek Cypriot ships and planes. Using the Taiwan example for a country not recognized by other countries but still having trade with them, Bağış said certain countries of the EU can have direct trade with Northern Cyprus and have flights to Ercan. Bağış also underlined that opening the ports will not mean recognition as the ports were open until 1987.

"Cyprus problem an obstacle in membership process"

Egemen Bağış said that while the Cyprus problem remains an obstacle in Turkey's EU membership process, it is also a sensitive issue that should not be expected to be sacrificed for the EU alone by any politician in Turkey. Pointing to the PM Erdoğan's efforts towards improving Turkish-Greek relations, Bağış referred to the Imia/Kardak crisis and being on the brink of war over a few meters in the Aegean. He stressed that the improvement in Turkish-Greek relations alone is a success story in itself. Exemplified in the increasing of air corridors from 2 to 11, signing of agreements to avoid double taxation, encouragement of investors from private sectors on both sides, an Greek National Bank's presence in Turkey, Bağış said Turkish companies now open Turkish restaurants in Athens and sell baklava. Stating that they regarded Yiorgchos Papandreou's election with pleasure, Bağış underlined that a solution to the Cyprus problem will sooner or later push Turkey towards the EU.

Turkey plays an important role

Bağış said that Turkey is playing an important role in its mediations between Afghanistan-Pakistan, Bosnia-Serbia, Russia-Georgia and Syria, Israel and Palestine. Calling it shameful that the Cyprus problem cannot be solved while Turkey is working to find solutions to all these international disputes, Bağış also claimed that "it takes two to tango", and that he knows PM Erdoğan is committed to his "one step ahead" thesis.

Full support

Bağış said that Turkey will fully support a solution agreed upon by presidents Talat and Christofias, provided it is consented by their peoples and relies on political equality, saying “Turkey will be there for any solution that both Turkish and Greek Cypriots agree on.”

Turkey keeps its promises

Asked again whether there will be a meeting with Christofias, Bağış stated that “if the leaders of the two societies in Cyprus agree on rotational presidency, then there can be no problem in meeting with the president and the deputy president separately. In the case of a clear indication towards a lasting solution on the island, Bağış said the Turkish army will neither block the decision nor resist the solution, because the army wants it confirmed that the island will have a lasting solution and sustainably peace, rather than a temporary fix.

What Was the Meaning behind Erdoğan's Words?

By Stefanos Evripidou | Cyprus Mail | March 7, 2010

Last month might prove to be just like any month, any February of any year in the calendar cycle. Or it could prove to be the month that saw a fundamental shift in Turkish policy on Cyprus and the obstinate conflict that refuses to be quiet.

Three key Turkish figures in the top echelons of power broke new ground, opening backchannels of communication with Greek Cypriots for the first time in decades.

Mid-February, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu invited Greek Cypriot representatives of academia and civil society to his offices in Ankara to discuss Greek-Turkish relations and the Cyprus problem.

Last weekend, Greek Cypriot journalists and politicians shared a 90-minute meeting with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayip Erdoğan and one hour with EU Minister Egemen Bağış in Istanbul. This was the first time a Turkish leader directly addressed Greek Cypriot representatives, specifically, journalists from Alithia, Politis and the Cyprus Mail, as well as former Cyprus-EU chief negotiator Takis Hadjidemetriou and United Democrats leader Praxoulla Antoniadou Kyriacou.

Turkish Cypriot journalists also attended but one could argue they were only there to hold the candles as the real date was between the Turkish leadership and the Greek Cypriot contingent.

Perhaps equally important was the presence of the Greek delegation. Cyprus has always been used as a lever for thawing or heating relations between Greece and Turkey. More recently, it's been considered a thorn in the side of improving Greco-Turkish relations. Removing the Cyprus problem would probably eliminate the biggest obstacle to peaceful cooperation between the two NATO members in the Eastern Mediterranean. So what messages did Erdoğan give?

Time is right for a solution

"The time is now for Cyprus, with four pro-solution leaders in the two communities and two 'motherlands'."

This is significant in that it acknowledges that President Demetris Christofias actually wants a solution. As Bağış put it: “The problem and the solution are both on the island. The two leaders both want a solution. The two prime ministers of the guarantor countries also want a solution. The two leaders know what the problems are and who is blocking the solution.”

Now, when Turkey backs you up on your solution credentials, it goes some way to undermining those critics who argue you’re simply manoeuvring to avoid blame for the collapse of the talks while preparing for re-election.

A side message here was that Ankara would not let contender to the Turkish Cypriot throne Dervis Eroğlu walk out of the talks should he get elected. However, by the time he gets clued up and builds a workable, trusting relationship with Christofias, too much time will have passed- an obvious nod to Mehmet Ali Talat.

Leadership skills

“A solution requires leadership, strong will and determination.”

The inference here is that Erdoğan has all three qualities, as displayed in last month’s mop up of unruly army officers, while Christofias needs to acquire all three and fast.

The Turkish PM acknowledged that the Greek Cypriot leader was taking a lot of flak from the press on the negotiations, but tempered that with: “We would not like to see some excuses cast a shadow over this process because the goal at the end of the day is to reach a comprehensive settlement, and I believe that if the necessary strong determination and will is presented then we can achieve a fair and lasting result in as short a time as possible.”

On parliament’s resolution calling for an end to guarantees in Cyprus and by extension Europe, Erdoğan said: “Internal domestic problems cannot constitute an excuse for the actions of the Greek Cypriot side.”

In the same vein but in slight contradiction, Bağış stressed that the Cyprus issue was such a delicate issue in Turkey that no elected politician could be expected to sacrifice on Cyprus just for the EU. He also noted that the nationalist party in Turkey had doubled its vote in five years to 16 per cent by campaigning solely on the platform that Erdoğan had sold out northern Cyprus.

“So you have to understand Turkey is not an emirate, it’s not a sultanate where the prime minister makes a decision and everybody obeys. This is a democracy, and we have to always keep the balance and watch and be careful about the sensitivities of the people,” explained Bağış.

Turkey’s support is genuine

“Turkey genuinely seeks a fair and lasting comprehensive solution based on the joint declaration of the two leaders on May 23, 2008.”

Erdoğan referred specifically to his support for a bizonal, bicomunal federation as defined by the relevant UN resolutions, with political equality and a single international identity. UN Special Adviser to Cyprus Alexander Downer found this to be particularly “significant” since it was the first time a Turkish PM had been “so specific and so clear about Turkey’s support” for the agreed basis of a solution.

However, after May 23, Talat and Christofias also agreed on the idea of “single citizenship” and “single sovereignty”. This was not given specific reference by Erdoğan though one could refer to Bağış’ assertion that Turkey is ready to support any solution agreed by the two leaders which has majority support from their communities.

Withdrawal of Turkish troops

“Turkish troops would leave Cyprus, perhaps in their entirety.”

Erdoğan: “With respect to the withdrawal of troops, we’ve spoken about this before. Over a period of time, we’ve said before that those troops can be withdrawn.” However, Turkey will not respond to calls for immediate troop withdrawal, he added.

Bağış was more specific: “Any solution that President Talat and President Christofias can come up with and convince their respective communities will have Turkey’s full blessing and support. As long as it is based on political equality, as long as Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots accept the solution, Turkey will be there. If that solution involves withdrawing our troops, we will withdraw our troops.”

He said that the top Turkish military brass, also known as the “deep state”, had approved the Annan plan back in 2004 which called for a reduction in Turkish troops to 650 and Greek troops to 950.

Bağış even hinted that the option of all troops leaving the island was not unthinkable if the two communities agreed on it. “The Turkish military was OK with the Annan plan. It was difficult. And by now, in the fifth anniversary of the Annan plan, there would be referenda on the island, to zero the number of troops on the island.”

Turkey will honour its signature

“Our goal is to achieve a lasting comprehensive settlement to the problem in Cyprus. We are ready to do our share to achieve that goal, and no one should or can doubt Turkey’s sincerity,” Erdoğan said. A significant factor here is the acknowledgement, perhaps for the first time, that fear, suspicion and mistrust plagued both communities and not just the one.

Again, Bağış was more forthcoming on Greek Cypriot fears that Turkey will not stick to its part of the bargain. “Turkey does not make a promise until she’s ready. But once we make a promise, we always keep it, especially as long as Erdoğan is prime minister. I can assure you this is a man who has spent a whole life keeping his promises, knowing that it will hurt him.

He told a story from Burgenstock in 2004 when the then President Tassos Papadopoulos and Greek PM Costas Karamanlis approached Erdoğan with an offer. They pledged to push for a date for the start of EU accession talks with Turkey if he agreed to postpone the solution talks in Switzerland. Papadopoulos argued that they weren’t ready and needed more time. Erdoğan refused, citing a promise he made to the UN Secretary-General to always be one step ahead.

“I spent more time with him in the last eight years than with my family. I know him, he’s a man of his word. Either he doesn’t give the word, but if he does, his word is stronger than any signature, commitment, law or parliament action, I can assure you of that,” said Bağış.

To underline the fear imprinted in both communities, Bağış recalled that his father was as a teacher in Paphos in the 1960s, before he was born.

“He would tell my mother he’s going to the coffee shop at night, but he would go to the ceiling of the apartment that they lived in and wait in front of the gun in case someone came to attack our family.

“We all hear stories like this. I heard it when I was growing up, but it’s enough. We have to think about our children, not our childhood, but our children,” he said.

Direct dialogue

“Let’s get together and talk through our problems in a four or five-party meeting.”

One of the stumbling blocks identified in finding a solution is the lack of mutual understanding and trust between Turkey and the Greek Cypriots, who never have direct dialogue. Erdoğan has suggested that the two leaders on the island meet with the two guarantor powers, Greece and Turkey, in four-party talks. Britain as a non-“motherland” is not necessarily needed though would be accepted if requested.

Christofias rejected the proposal arguing that this would mean de facto recognition of Talat as president. The Turkish PM counter-offered saying the meeting could take place under the auspices of the UNSG, a bit like what’s happening in Nicosia airport now. Another proposal was to include Spain, currently holding the EU Presidency, which has friendly relations with both Cyprus and Turkey.

Greek Cypriots on Turkey’s EU accession

“Who do Greek Cypriots think they are blocking an entire energy chapter?”

Turkey clearly does not like being pushed into a corner, and this was made clear by all three Turkish officials. The impression given was that you would get more working with Turkey than going against it. Another view is that Greek Cypriots wouldn’t even be on the Turkish radar if they didn’t use what few levers they had at their disposal.

Bağış was at pains to stress that EU membership was really to the benefit of Greek Cypriots. Erdoğan offered to give fresh water to the Greek Cypriots through

a pipeline from Turkey to Cyprus. “I don’t know, maybe the Greek Cypriots won’t want that water, maybe they’ll say it’s Turkish water.” Bağış described EU accession as the “golden formula” that would eliminate fears and suspicions on both sides of the divide.

End to arms purchases

“Greece and Turkey need to stop buying arms and invest in peace and prosperity for the region.”

Both Bağış and Erdoğan gave a lot of emphasis to improving relations with Greece. Bağış noted that some countries were against Turkey’s EU membership because they wanted to continue selling arms to both Turkey and Greece.

“We were about to have a war over some rocks on the Aegean,” said Bağış, adding that the Erdoğan government has done much to enhance ties between the two historic foes since coming to power.

Erdoğan said: “What happened has happened in the past, we should leave it there. We have to look at the future and how we build the future... What we’re saying to our friends is to not engage in more armaments because we should be in the people, that’s what gains us results.”

In fact, ambitions to create “zero problems” with its neighbours is one of Turkey’s driving forces in seeking to conclude the Cyprus problem, that and its need to stay on the path to EU accession.

One factor worth noting here is the indication that Turkey sees the Greek Cypriots as being inextricably linked to Greece in the way Turkish Cypriots are to Turkey. For example, Turkey might misguidedly assume that Greek Cypriots would accept a solution whereby Turkey retains guarantor rights over a Turkish Cypriot constituent state if there was a similar Greek guarantee for the Greek Cypriot constituent state.

What the analyst says

Hugh Pope of the International Crisis Group in Istanbul said the meeting between the top Turkish leaders and Greek Cypriots was “absolutely marvellous”.

“There is no established track two between Turkey and the Greek Cypriots. It’s immediately apparent that the two sides are much closer conceptually than they are rhetorically.

“If you blindfolded the two sides and found out what’s really going on, they are not that far apart. It’s a matter of trust. Can a Greek Cypriot trust in a normalised future with Turkey, that troops will go? The only way they can really believe that in their hearts is if they meet Erdoğan and Davutoğlu face to face,” he said.

“The key thing stopping negotiations leaving first base is Christofias wondering whether Turkey is there for him, whether he’s really negotiating a solution or an interim agreement. He will only ever know if he meets them.”

Pope argued that Turkey was trying in its own way to reach out to Greek Cypriots. “Just like Christofias must be seeing a brick wall rushing up to him, Turkey also knows that failure in the talks puts the Cyprus problems in the deep freeze indefinitely.

“They’ve adopted new language, talking about two presidents. They’re offering to bring in an EU country to make it easier for Christofias to meet. It’s the Turkish equivalent of an appeal, saying ‘please let’s meet and talk,’” said Pope.

The analyst argued that the decision was taken as far back as 2002 that it would be better for the Turkish Cypriots to join the EU before the Turks. “Plan A is not independence of the ‘TRNC’. It’s definitely plan B though.”

Chronology of Key Events Related to the Cyprus Question

Pre-Independence

- 1914** Cyprus was annexed by Britain, after more than 300 years of Ottoman rule.
- 1925** Cyprus became a British Crown Colony.
- 1955** Greek Cypriots began guerrilla war against the British rule. The guerrilla movement, the National Organisation of Cypriot Combatants (EOKA), asked for enosis (unification) with Greece.
- 1955** Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus declared his will for Cyprus to be unified with Greece.
- 1955** A state of emergency was proclaimed in Cyprus.
- 1956** Archbishop Makarios, who was seen as the head of the enosis campaign, was arrested and deported to the Seychelles by British authorities.
- 1957** Britain accepted a NATO offer to mediate in Cyprus whereas Greece rejected the offer.
- 1959** Britain, Turkey and Greece signed an agreement that granted Cyprus independence.
- 1959** Archbishop Makarios returned to Cyprus after 3 years of exile and was elected President.

Independence

- 1960** Cyprus gained independence after Greek and Turkish communities reached an agreement on the constitution. The 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus was prepared.
- 1960** Treaty of Guarantee was signed. It gave Britain, Greece and Turkey the right to intervene if necessary. Britain retained its right over two military bases.

- 1961** Cyprus became a member of the Council of Europe.
- 1963** Makarios proposed constitutional changes that would abrogate power sharing arrangements. Inter-communal violence erupted. The Turkish side withdrew from power-sharing arrangement negotiations.
- 1964** A United Nations peacekeeping force was set up. Turkish Cypriots withdrew into defended enclaves.
- 1974** The military junta in Greece supported the coup against Makarios. Soon after, Turkish troops intervened in the North as violence rose visibly. After the coup collapsed, Glafcos Clerides, president of the House of Representatives, became the new president.
- 1975** Turkish Cypriots established their independent administration, with Rauf Denктаş as president. Denктаş and Clerides agreed to a population exchange.
- 1977** Makarios died. He was succeeded by Spyros Kyprianou.
- 1980** UN-sponsored peace talks resumed.
- 1983** Denктаş announced the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).
- 1985** Talks resumed between Denктаş and Kyprianou, no agreement was reached.
- 1988** Georgios Vassiliou was elected Greek Cypriot president.
- 1989** Vassiliou-Denктаş talks were abandoned.
- 1992** Talks resumed and collapsed once again.
- 1993** Glafcos Clerides replaced Vassiliou as President.
- 1994** European Court of Justice ruled that a list of goods, including fruits and vegetables, were not eligible for preferential treatment when exported by the Turkish Cypriot community directly to the EU.
- 1996** Tension increased and violence erupted along the buffer zone.
- 1997** UN-mediated peace talks between Clerides and Denктаş failed when the EU announced that it would begin membership talks with the Greek-led Cypriot government.
- 1998** Clerides was re-elected to a second term of Presidency. The EU listed Cyprus as a potential member.

- 2001** UN Security Council renewed its 36-year mission of peacekeeping forces at the buffer zone.
- 2001** Turkey published a declaration saying if the Republic of Cyprus joins the EU before any reunification settlement, this would violate the 1960 treaty.
- 2002** Clerides and Denktaş began UN-sponsored mediation talks.
- 2002** A comprehensive peace plan was presented by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, which envisaged a federation with two constituent parts.
- 2002** EU summit in Copenhagen invited Cyprus to join the EU in 2004, provided that the two communities agreed to the UN peace plan by early spring 2003. Without reunification, only the internationally recognized Greek Cypriot part of the island would gain membership.
- 2003** Tassos Papadopoulos was elected as the new President.
- 2003** Turkish and Greek Cypriots crossed the island's dividing "green line" for the first time in 30 years.
- 2004** Double referenda were held to accept the UN reunification plan. The plan was endorsed by the Turkish Cypriots but was overwhelmingly rejected by the Greek Cypriots. The EU agreed to take steps to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community.

EU accession

- 2004** Cyprus became one of the 10 new states to join the EU, but did so as a divided island.
- 2004** Turkey agreed to extend its EU Customs Union agreement to 10 new member states, including Cyprus.
- 2005** Mehmet Ali Talat was elected as the new TRNC president.
- 2005** Turkey offered a six-point action plan for opening ports and airports to RoC vessels.
- 2006** The Immovable Property Commission was established in the Northern part as a local remedy to the ongoing property problem on the island.

- 2006** UN-sponsored talks between President Papadopolous and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat resulted in a plan proposing a series of confidence building measures and contacts between the two communities.
- 2006** EU-Turkey talks on Cyprus broke down over Turkey's refusal to open its ports and airports to the RoC flagged vessels. Ankara claimed the EU should end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community before Turkey could take any action.
- 2010** The European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee decided that the members of the European Parliament do not have co-decision power over Direct Trade Regulation, enforcement of which is pending since 2004.

Bi-Communal Talks

- 2008** In March the Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and the Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat agreed on resuming bi-communal talks aimed at the reunification of the island.
- 2008** Six Working Groups (Working Groups on: governance and power sharing, European Union matters, security and guarantees, territory, property, and economic matters) and seven Technical Committees (Technical Committees on: crime and criminal matters, economic and commercial matters, cultural heritage, crisis management, humanitarian matters, health, and environment) were established to ease the negotiation process. The Working Groups and the Technical Committees held more than 270 meetings until the negotiations started and some of them continue meeting parallelly with the high-level negotiations.
- 2008** In May Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat issued a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as defined by relevant Security Council resolutions.
- 2008** The Ledra Street crossing for pedestrians in the center of Nicosia reopened after 44 years.
- 2008** In September Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat started negotiations under the auspices of the good offices of the UN Secretary General.

- 2010** In February, the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan together with the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış met with the Greek Cypriot journalists within the framework of the Heybeliada Talks. It was for the first time since the Cyprus problem started that Turkish high-level officials talked directly to Greek Cypriots.
- 2010** In May, the negotiations resumed between Demetris Christofias and the newly elected Turkish Cypriot President Derviş Eroğlu after two month long break.
- 2010** In October, the Limnitis/Yeşilırmak crossing opened and became the seventh road linking the two communities.
- 2010** In November, UN Secretary General tried to speed up the negotiations by inviting Demetris Christofias and Derviş Eroğlu for a tripartite meeting in New York.
- 2011** In January, Demetris Christofias and Derviş Eroğlu met with the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in Geneva to report on the progress made since November.

Elections (2008-2013)

- 2008** In February Demetris Christofias from the left-wing Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) was elected President of RoC in the second round and became the new community leader replacing the incumbent Tassos Papadopoulos.
- 2009** In April National Unity Party won parliamentary elections in the TRNC and thus majority in the parliament. The list of parties that made it to the Parliament include: Republican Turkish Party, Democratic Party, Communal Democracy Party, and Freedom and Reform Party.
- 2009** In October 2009, the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) won the parliamentary elections in Greece.
- 2010** In February Karolos Papoulias from PASOK was elected the President of Greece.
- 2010** In April Derviş Eroğlu from the National Unity Party (UBP) was elected President of the TRNC and became the new community leader replacing the incumbent Mehmet Ali Talat.

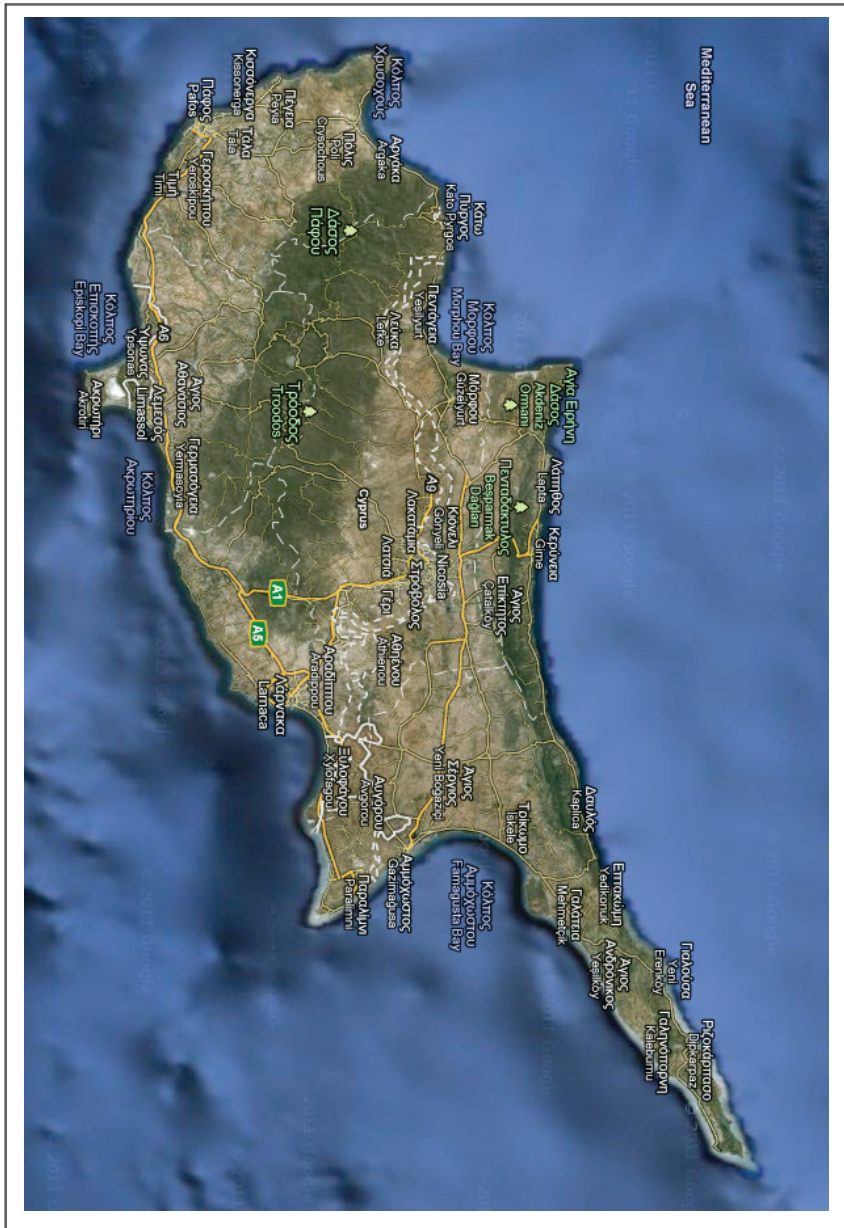
2011 In May the RoC will hold parliamentary elections.

2011 In June the Republic of Turkey will hold parliamentary elections.

2013 In February the RoC will hold presidential elections.

Map of Cyprus

Retrieved from <http://www.maps.google.com>, February 10, 2011.



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Since July 2008, Global Political Trends Center (GPoT) has been bringing together opinion leaders from North and South Cyprus, as well as Greece and Turkey, under the banner of the “Heybeliada Talks” to discuss issues pertaining to the solution of the Cyprus problem. The meetings, usually closed to journalists and conducted under Chatham House rules, provided the participants with a trusting environment to frankly debate contested issues, usually in parallel with the official negotiations. GPoT Center is by principle committed to the ideals of dialogue, non-violence, reconciliation and consensus for both this process and the eventual solution. This publication is a combination of the work of the GPoT staff and the participants of the nine rounds of the Heybeliada Talks held to date. Our main objective in preparing this book has been to consolidate the ideas put forth during the past years by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and to have them be accessible to a wider public of policy-makers, media and academics, as well as governments and political figures.

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