



## EDITOR'S NOTE

An EU member state in the Eastern Mediterranean, at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa; this is Cyprus in a nutshell.

The monthly FES Cyprus Newsletter gives you a current overview of the domestic political situation and the external affairs of an island, which is far more than a divided country. Have a pleasant read!

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140  
JANUARY 24





## FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

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PODCASTS in FEBRUARY:  
*No podcasts in February*



PODCASTS in MARCH  
*No podcasts in March*

PUBLICATIONS in FEBRUARY:  
*No publications in February*



PUBLICATIONS in MARCH:  
*No publications in March*

EVENTS in FEBRUARY:  
*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung plus  
Diplomats in the West Mediterranean*  
**„Diplomatic Horizons and Opportunities  
within the West Mediterranean“**  
Date: Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> February -  
Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Location: Barcelona  
**Closed Workshop**



EVENTS in MARCH:  
*No events planned in March so far*





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### CYPRUS PROBLEM & INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

On January 5, UN Secretary General (UNSG), Antonio Guterres, appointed former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, María Ángela Holguín Cuellar as his personal envoy for the Cyprus issue. Her main task is to attempt to find common ground between the parties to the conflict to resume substantial talks to overcome the division of the island. There have been no substantial negotiations on the Cyprus issue since the failure of the last UN-led effort in Crans Montana in 2017, making this the longest period without talks since the breakdown of the constitutional order in 1963. Holguín held a series of meetings in New York with UN officials, including Special Representative in Cyprus, Colin Stewart; Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Miroslav Jenca; and UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo.

On January 29, Holguín began her meetings on the island where she first met with UNFICYP head Colin Stewart. On January 30, Holguín held separate meetings with Cyprus President Christodoulides and the Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar. Christodoulides reportedly reiterated his willingness to resume the talks from the point where they were interrupted, in accordance with the resolutions of the UN Security Council, on the basis of a bi-zonal bi-communal federation. Tatar reiterated his position that there are two states in Cyprus and in order to find common ground, the sovereign equality of Turkish Cypriots must be accepted. With regards to a potential joint meeting, Christodoulides stated he was willing to attend one, while Tatar declined a joint meeting on the grounds that this would give the impression that he intended to resume negotiations from where they stopped in Crans Montana. The personal envoy held a number of meetings including the negotiators of both sides, the UNSG's good offices, diplomats, UNFICYP peacekeepers, members of the Committee

on Missing Persons and individuals from civil society. She also visited the buffer zone and the fenced-off town of Varosha. Holguín is also expected to meet in Brussels with representatives of the guarantor powers, notably Greece, Turkey and the UK.

On January 10, Turkish Cypriot forces initiated construction activities of an anti-tank trench in the north outside the buffer zone in the area of Denia/Denya. The activities raised concern among the people in the south. UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus spokesman Aleem Siddique reassured that any construction being undertaken by Turkish forces was outside the buffer zone and that its status remains unchanged.

On January 25, the bicomunal Eastern Mediterranean Think Tank penned a letter to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, Nikos Christodoulides and Ersin Tatar, respectively, imploring them to make progress towards the island's reunification based on relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, the Guterres Framework, and the convergences attained in 2017 at Crans Montana. The think tank consists of prominent members of both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities.

On January 26, the government announced 14 measures to help bring Turkish Cypriots closer to the Republic of Cyprus. The wide-ranging measures affect the daily lives of Turkish Cypriots and include lifting the prohibition of children of mixed marriages between a Turk and a Turkish Cypriot from applying for Cyprus citizenship, expanding the list of goods allowed to cross between Cyprus' two sides under the Green Line Regulation, bolstering the staffing levels at the crossing points, and widening the Ayios Dhometios/Metehan crossing point in Nicosia. In the field of healthcare, Turkish Cypriots will now have access to the Institute of Neurology and Genetics and will have their extraordinary and urgent

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pharmaceutical needs covered by the government. The government will also pay widows' pensions to Turkish Cypriots who have the right to one and allow Turkish Cypriots the right to participate in human resources programmes, within the framework of the government's action plan for the European Year of skills. Turkish Cypriots who turn 18 will have the right to obtain a Youth Culture Card, loaded with €220 that can be spent on attending cultural events, while the government also promised to implement rapid transport measures for Turkish Cypriot children who cross the Ledra Palace crossing point to go to school every day. Turkish-speaking workers will also be recruited to work at the Citizens' Service Centre in Nicosia, while the government also pledged to ensure the continued smooth operation of the capital's sewage treatment plant in Mia Milia/Haspolat, and further facilitate access to Muslim sites in the Republic. Referring to citizenship, Turkish Cypriot CTP party leader Tufan Erhürman commented that it is the right of children of mixed marriages to gain citizenship of the Republic of Cyprus and should not be presented as a favour nor a confidence building measure.

On January 27, members of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot unions of journalists joined forces to plant trees "on the soil of their common homeland", as stated in a joint press release. The tree-planting initiative occurred in the Trachonas/Kizilbash area, situated in the north. Olive trees were planted in a space adjacent to a children's park, and a commemorative sign will be erected at the site.

On January 29, applications opened for the annual bi-communal entrepreneurship prizes at the Stelios Bi-communal Business Cooperation Awards, given to Greek and Turkish Cypriots who work together.

Former Immovable Property Commission (IPC) Chairman Ayfer Said Erkmen stated that the cost of compensating every single Greek Cypriot for every single piece of land lost in 1974 may amount to €26.3bn. He went on to explain that, as of January 2024, a total of 7,473 applications have been made by Greek Cypriots to the IPC and, of those applications, a total of 1,483 have been resolved, with the agreed compensation figure currently sitting at just shy of €383m. He also noted the issue of Turkish Cypriot properties in the south, saying there are 455,000 donums (455 square kilometres) remaining. This number has reduced since 2016 from 591,000 donums (591 square kilometres), with many Turkish Cypriots having chosen to sell their properties.

On January 30, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution extending the UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus's (UNFICYP) mandate for one more year until January 31, 2025. The resolution was adopted unanimously, as all 15 members of the council voted in favour. The renewal was welcomed by the Greek Cypriot side. The Turkish Cypriot side was critical about the renewal saying the UNFICYP has failed to fulfil basic tasks and insisting that the UN Force in Cyprus also needed official approval of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus".<sup>1</sup>

According to the Turkish Cypriot daily Yeniduzen, the north paid US\$19 million to the south for elec-

<sup>1</sup>The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is only recognised by the Republic of Turkey. While for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, Ersin Tatar serves as President of the TRNC, the international community considers him the communal leader of the Turkish Cypriots. As the government of the Republic of Cyprus remains internationally

recognised as the government of the whole of the island, the entire island is now considered to be a member of the European Union. However, the *acquis communautaire* is suspended in northern Cyprus pending a political settlement to the Cyprus problem (see Protocol no. 10 of the Accession Treaty).





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tricity in 2023. The north went through a period of rolling blackouts due to problems in the tender process for fuel supplies and the breaking down of generators due to lack of investment in its power plant run by the public Electricity Authority (Kib-Tek) before the contract between the Turkish private company AKSA and Kib-Tek was extended. The transaction between the two electricity authorities was completed through the chambers of commerce of the two sides.

### HYDROCARBONS

On January 7, during an interview with Politis, Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos stated that he would welcome a dialogue with Ankara on natural gas before solving the Cyprus problem only if it was between the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Turkey, but not the TRNC.

### GREEK CYPRIOTS

#### Gender Developments

On January 11, the Council of Ministers approved the National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2024-2026. A key focus of the strategy is equal access to employment, the promotion of a balanced representation of women and men in leadership, and the reduction in the pay gap. Furthermore, the strategy introduces the concept of "gender budgeting", which involves integrating a gender perspective at all levels of government budget preparation.

On January 30, the President made his State of Republic address where he announced more than 80 planned governmental policies to be implemented within the year. Among them was the extension of maternity leave from 18 to 22 weeks.

Women's group Pogo criticised Christodoulides' new appointments in his mini cabinet reshuffle, ar-

guing that his election pledge to have his cabinet split 50/50 between men and women was now even further from reality. The reshuffle had reduced the number of female ministers from three to two, or just 18%, of the 11 ministers.

### Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

On January 9, the electricity authority (EAC) inaugurated a new photovoltaic park which will help the island move away from power generated from fossil fuels. Reportedly, the new PV park avoids the purchase of 5,000 tonnes of fossil fuel, saving €2.8m annually based on today's prices; reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 14,000 tonnes, and saves €1.1m annually from the purchase of carbon credits. Energy Minister George Papanastasiou stated during the inauguration that the penetration of renewables in electricity production remains particularly difficult due to the small and isolated size of the Cyprus market, the absence of storage systems, and seasonal demand. According to the minister, Cyprus is running behind its renewables target for the year 2030. In 2022, the share of renewables in gross final consumption of energy stood at 19.4%, ranking Cyprus 16th in the EU27 bloc. The EAC has also announced an open public contest aiming to secure land parcels of 30,000 square metres for lease from private owners to develop further parks.

On January 16, a workshop titled "How do I measure and reduce the environmental footprint of my business?" took place at Paralimni town hall. During the event, the Commissioner of the Environment, Antonia Theodosiou, said it was critical for businesses to align with the newly established framework of the European Green Deal. Theodosiou praised the workshop's primary objective of empowering businesses. This practical approach supported national goals linked to the European Green Deal and the 'Fit for 55' package. It provided practical solutions for businesses and was in line with the EU's aim to

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reduce greenhouse emissions by at least 55% by 2030. Thedosiou spoke about the business benefits, including enhanced market access and positive impacts on energy efficiency and cost savings, especially given the growing trend of consumers making choices based on ethical and environmental criteria.

An amount of €5m has been allocated by the government to help businesses reduce their carbon footprint. The support measure aims at encouraging businesses to reduce greenhouse emissions and was given the green light by the Commissioner of State Aid, Stella Michaelidou, at the end of December 2023. The funding for this initiative will come from the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility for 2022-2026. The maximum amount of financial support that can be granted to a large business would be up to 60% of eligible costs, which cannot exceed €18.5k; to medium-sized businesses up to 70% of eligible costs, not exceeding €15.5k; and to small businesses up to 80%, not exceeding €11.5k.

On January 25, the Cabinet approved the 'photovoltaics for all' scheme which will open for the public to apply. The scheme entails five categories aimed at making solar energy and roof insulation accessible to all homes. Installers of photovoltaics and roof insulation are expected to begin registration shortly, paving the way to allow the public to submit applications, most likely by the end of February 2024.

On January 29, speaking to lawmakers at the House finance committee, Stavros Stavrinos, Executive Director at the Transmission System Operator (TSO) stated that the much-touted opening up of the electricity market has been pushed back to the summer of 2025. Stavrinos stated that staff should be hired by September 2024 and they will need three to four months to be trained. Once their training is complete, in early 2025, the TSO will carry out the third trial run of the system managing the electricity market. This in turn should take three to six months.

### Domestic Developments

On January 8, Christodoulides announced the replacement of four of his ministers as part of a mini reshuffle. The controversial cabinet reshuffle was marked by discontent among the outgoing ministers who found out that they were being replaced through press reports or leaks. The new cabinet and commissioners were sworn in on January 10. In particular, Justice Minister Anna Procopiou was replaced by Marios Hartsiotis, Defense Minister Michalis Giorgallas was replaced by Vasilis Palmas, Health Minister Popi Kanari was replaced by Michael Damianos, and Agriculture Minister Petros Xenophontos was replaced by Maria Panayiotou. Amid rumours that he would be replaced, Deputy Research, Innovation and Digital Policy Minister Philippos Hadjizacharias resigned on January 5, and he was replaced by Nikodemos Damianou. Moreover, Marilena Raouna was named as the Deputy Minister of European Affairs, Panayiotis Palates as the Commissioner for Citizens, Charalambos Christophinis as the Commissioner for Mountainous Regions, and Antonia Theodosiou as Commissioner for the Environment. Reportedly, the political parties that have been supporting Christodoulides, including DIPA, EDEK and DIK, were completely caught off guard by the President's intention for a cabinet reshuffle.

The new justice minister, Hartsiotis, has been running his own law office in Limassol since 1990. Palmas, the new Defence Minister, most recently served as a deputy minister to former President Nicos Anastasiades, a position he held until February 2022, when he resigned for personal reasons. The new agriculture minister, Panayiotou, served most recently as the environment commissioner. Damianos is the deputy DIKO leader.

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### Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

On January 3, Cyta employees initiated a 2-hour work stoppage signaling a potential escalation of their strike activities. Main issues of conflict are the request of the company to expand service provision, increase the proportion of employees under private law contracts and reduce salary scales for new hires under public law contracts. Following the stoppage, trade unions announced a 24-hour warning strike for January 16. On January 10, Cyta invited trade unions to return for social dialogue, and therefore the strike was cancelled. It is to be noted that Cyta operates as a semi-governmental organisation. On January 25, and following negotiations, the company agreed to the terms set forth by the trade unions and reached an agreement. Trade unions ensured that through the agreement Cyta maintains a high percentage of employees under public law, specifically 60%, while it upgrades the organisation's hourly staff salaries by 5.75%. Both sides characterised this development as a milestone for Cyta.

On January 9, social partners met in the context of the tripartite monitoring committee to discuss the implementation of the new strategy for the employment of third country national (TCN) workers. While trade unions acknowledge the importance of labour market growth, they expressed significant reservations. Their concerns primarily revolved around employers' non-compliance with the collective agreements and the increase of irregular employment practices. Conversely, employers' organisations request the elimination of quotas concerning the percentage of migrant workers in a business, asserting a high demand for workers regardless of adherence to collective agreements. The current strategy provides that companies adhering to collective agreements can employ up to 50% TCNs compared to the 30% allowance for companies that do not participate in collective agreements. Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB) and

Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KEBE) supported the idea that companies should be permitted to hire TCNs if they can demonstrate an inability to meet their workforce needs. The discussion underscored a significant gap between the positions of employers' and workers' organisations.

On January 17, the Director of the Ministry of Labour highlighted the substantial gap between the social partners. As a result, the director must submit a report to the Minister of Labour who in turn will call an extraordinary meeting of the Labour Advisory Body to attempt to reconcile the differences. In the event that the deadlock persists, the Minister of Labour will prepare a proposal to the Council of Ministers based on the final positions submitted by employer's organisations and trade unions.

On January 15, the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance announced the initiation of a plan to provide training to workers from leisure centres located in Famagusta and Pafos, which have temporarily suspended their operations during the period December 2023 and March 2024. The aim of this plan is to offer training opportunities to employees to enhance their professional skills.

On January 17, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance announced the introduction of a new mechanism to regulate the employment of asylum seekers. This mechanism aims to prevent the initiation or continuation of employment for individuals who are not eligible for work. In particular, the new system will notify employers when an asylum application is rejected and will prevent employers from hiring asylum seekers who have not completed the 9-month waiting period after submitting their international protection application.

In addition, on January 17, the Council of Ministers approved amendments to the procedures for the Blue Card (EU Blue Card) which concern the condi-

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tions of entry and residence of highly skilled TCNs. The proposed legislation harmonizes with the relevant EU directive. The aim of the amendments is to attract skilled non-EU workers by establishing a more flexible framework for their entry and stay in Cyprus.

On January 26, workers of the Social Welfare Services and District Welfare Offices went on a two-hour work stoppage due to understaffing. As it is reported in the announcement of the Pancyprian Union of Civil Servants (PA.SY.DY), the workers will stop using their private vehicles for work purposes and refrain from on-call duties until the return of 14 workers who have been transferred from the Social Welfare services.

Furthermore, on January 26, Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KEBE) hosted the “Seminar of Social Partners for the Implementation of the European Agreement-Framework for Digitalisation”. The aim was to introduce and initiate discussions on key aspects of the agreement, including the imperative for reskilling and upskilling workers, the changing employment relations, the development of digital transformation strategies for businesses, and the mutual commitment of employers and workers to undertake initiatives and joint actions for the successful implementation of the agreement. During the seminar attention was drawn to findings from the World Economic Forum 2023 [report](#), which underscored the importance of analytical thinking, leadership, social influence, creative thinking, artificial intelligence (AI) and big data as essential skills for the future. Additionally, projections from the report suggested that within the next five years, 83 million jobs are expected to be lost while 69 million jobs could be created.

According to data released by the Statistical Service, the number of registered unemployed persons at the District Labour Departments has declined in recent

months. Compared to January 2023, there has been a 12.3% reduction, equivalent to 2,059 persons. This decrease is primarily attributed to the growth in activities in sectors like finance and insurance, construction, trade, accommodation, food services and to a general decrease in new entrants to the labour market. It is worth mentioning that out of the 14,699 unemployed, 8,168 are women while, according to the Commissioner for Gender Equality, the gender pay gap stands at 9.9%.

As of January 2024, a new evaluation system for Public Servants has been put into operation that aims to offer a fairer approach. The new system will introduce an oral and a written exam for senior positions, representing 65% of their performance, while the other percentage will be covered by other criteria such as the years of experience and superiors' evaluations. A new element is evaluation of superiors by subordinates through a process which will ensure anonymity. The new system was positively welcomed by the trade union PASYDY.

Lastly, as of January 1, both employers' and employees' contributions on insurable earnings to the Social Insurance Fund will increase by 0.5%. Regarding the self-employed, the rate will increase to 1%.

### TURKISH CYPRIOTS

#### Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 85.8% higher in January 2024 compared to January 2023. Consumer prices had risen by 3.8% in January alone. The highest monthly inflation was in the “miscellaneous goods and services” segment where an increase of 11.4% was recorded. The monthly food inflation reached 10%. The opposition questioned the reliability of the figures released by the Statistical Institute and claimed that the real monthly inflation figure was much higher.

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The Statistical Institute also announced the results of the 2023 Household Labour Force Survey, which was conducted in October. The results showed that the unemployment rate fell to 5.1%, the lowest level since the annual survey was introduced in 2004. In 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, unemployment shot up from 6.3% (in 2019) to 10.1%. The rate then fell to 7.8% in 2021, and then to 6.8% in 2022. The youth unemployment also went down considerably from 19.2% in 2022 to 14.9% in 2023. The survey also showed that total employment amounted to 148,211 persons; 1.6% (2,436 persons) of those employed work in the southern part of the island. The labour force participation rate, an important indicator of the labour force, has been calculated at 50.9%.

In 2023, women comprised 34.7% (51,408 persons) of the employed population; 90.4% of employed women (51,408 persons) work in the services sector; 89.3% of women are employed as employees; 9.3% are self-employed or employers; and 1.4% work as unpaid family workers. Unemployment rate is higher among women (5.8%) both in the general population and among youth (15-24 age group) (17.5%). The survey also showed that the number of people employed in the public sector in the TRNC is 35,844; the share of public sector employment in total employment is 24.2%. According to the survey, 7.6% of the employed are not part of the social security system; among those who are unregistered, 72.2% are men, which corresponds to 11,243 individuals. The agricultural sector's total employment share was 3%, the manufacturing sector was 9.5%, the construction sector was 11.5%, while the service sector was 76.1%.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transportation stated that the private Turkish company operating the Ercan (Tymbou) Airport, T&T, will pay TL250m (€ 7.6 million) to the treasury for the last quarter of 2023 as part of its contract with the ministry.

### Relations with Turkey

A bill approving a protocol signed between the governments of the TRNC and Turkey to transfer the control of the disused Gecitkale (Lefkoniko) airport to the Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces Command has been unanimously passed by the Parliament. Tufan Erhürman, the chairperson of the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP), said that "the fact that [the airport] will not be used as a military base, its potential use as a backup for Ercan (Tymbou) [Airport], and its opening for air sports activities, are the reasons why CTP will vote in favour of the bill."

### Domestic Developments

On January 15, the People's Party (HP) chairperson Kudret Özersay filed a criminal case against the Public Works and Transport Minister and Rebirth Party (YDP) leader Erhan Arıklı. The complaint is related to the failure of Arıklı to notify the Parliament of significant changes in his assets. Özersay also accused the Parliament Speaker's office of "opening the door for other MPs to commit crimes by not enforcing the asset disclosure law".

According to the results of a face-to-face survey conducted by the Centre for Immigration Identity and Rights Studies (CMIRS) with 500 people in December 2023, 87% of Turkish Cypriots think that things are going in the wrong direction in the country. According to the participants, the most important challenges faced by the country are economic problems, inflation, the Cyprus problem, incompetent political leaders, cost of living, and corruption, respectively. Also, 54% think that their economic situation will be worse in two years, while 33% think that it will remain the same. Only 13% expect their economic situation to improve. Moreover, 74% percent of those who participated in the survey think that the country's economy will get worse in the next two years, while 15% think that it will remain the same; only 11% think that the TRNC economy will improve.

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The survey results also showed that interpersonal trust is very low among Turkish Cypriots: on a scale of 10, where 10 indicates the highest level of interpersonal trust, the Turkish Cypriot social capital score was measured as 2.37. Furthermore, the Accountability and Good Governance Barometer section of the same survey showed that the country fared worst in the following areas (scale of 10): “Accountability of those who govern us” (2.88), “transparency of the government decisions” (3.02), “healthcare” (3.23), “environmental protection” (3.59), and “justice in income distribution” (3.52). The best score, on the other hand, was 5.53, which was in the area of “freedom of thought and expression”. The least trusted institutions (on a scale of 5) are the government (1.94), the president (2.10), the parliament (2.15) and political parties (2.20), while the police and the judiciary are the most trusted ones with 3.59 and 3.46, respectively.

Participants were also asked questions related to the upcoming European Parliament (EP) elections. According to Mine Yücel, the director of CMIRS, there was a clear lack of interest and knowledge among survey participants regarding the EP elections. Only 10.66% of the respondents stated that they had voted in the EP elections held in 2019. Participants who are EU citizens (41% of the participants said that they were not EU citizens) but stated that they did not vote in the 2019 elections were also asked why they did not vote: Factors such as the “difficulty of crossing to the south to vote” (19.84%), “not believing that voting would have an impact” (17.41%), and “not knowing that they could vote” (12.21%) were found to be main reasons why Turkish Cypriots did not vote in the 2019 EP elections. Furthermore, a sizeable group (18.22%) stated that they were “against voting in the south”. A small portion (1.21%) stated that they went to the polls but could not vote. When asked whether they intended to vote this year, 17.51% said “yes”, and 33% said “no”. The participants who said that they did not intend to vote

also stated that they would be more likely to vote if certain conditions were met, such as “if voting was made easier” (19.23%) or if they “believed that their vote would have an impact” (13.46%); 37.5% said that they would not vote under any circumstances. Finally, 24.23% of the participants in the survey found Niyazi Kızılyurek, a Turkish Cypriot who is currently in the European Parliament on an AKEL ticket, successful, while 26.07% indicated that they found him unsuccessful. Almost half of the respondents (49.69%) stated that they did not have an opinion.

### Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

The Minimum Wage Determination Commission has set the first minimum wage for 2024, as gross TL27,587 (€836) and net TL24,000 TL (€727). The decision was made unanimously, and the new rate is effective as of January 1. The new minimum wage is more than 50% higher than the previous figure of TL15,750, and represents the largest Turkish Lira-value increase since 2005. The previous figure, TL15,750, was worth €541 when set, and was worth €478 at the time when the new wage was determined. In addition, according to the Cyprus Mail, the new minimum wage is higher than that of five European Union member states: Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Romania. The move has helped to alleviate fears after Turkey’s minimum wage surpassed that of the north at the beginning of January. The minimum wage in Turkey is now TL17,002 (€516). The minimum wage in the south, on the other hand, is €1,000 after the latest increase was announced in December. Furthermore, the Minister of Labour and Social Security Sadık Gardiynoğlu said that the government plans to adjust the minimum wage three times a year instead of twice in 2024, meaning that the minimum wage could rise again in May.

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## SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

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Yiannis Charalambous has been a Research Assistant for FES Cyprus contributing to the writing of the monthly FES Cyprus Newsletter since July 2012. Yiannis obtained a Bachelor's degree in Turkish Studies from the National Kapodistrian University of Athens and an MA in International Relations and European Studies from the University of Nicosia. The subject of his dissertation focused on evaluating the catalyst effect in resolving the Cyprus problem, by comparing the factors of EU membership and the discovery of hydrocarbons. Yiannis speaks Greek, English and Turkish.

### Hubert Faustmann

Hubert Faustmann is a Professor of History and International Relations at the University of Nicosia. Additionally, he is the director of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus. He is an expert on British colonial Cyprus and post-independence Cypriot history and politics. His research also focuses on Hydrocarbon politics in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as the relationship between state and society with a focus on Political Culture, Clientelism and Political Patronage.

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