



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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HEADLINES

EU Council reaffirms commitment to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem and links it with progress in Euro-Turkish relations, sparking reaction by the Turkish side.

63 candidacies were submitted for the upcoming European Parliament elections in June 2024. Among them were only 18 women, three Turkish Cypriots and two independents, including a young YouTuber.

The Turkish Cypriot government announced the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) will resume compensating Greek Cypriot property owners. Established in 2006 to comply with European Court of Human Rights rulings, the IPC addresses claims related to Greek Cypriot properties in north.

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PODCASTS in MAY:
No podcasts in May



PODCASTS in JUNE:
No podcasts in June

PUBLICATIONS in MAY:
Ömer Gökçekuş and Sertaç Sonan
**Corruption Perceptions in North Cyprus:
2023 Report**
(In English)



PUBLICATIONS in JUNE:
No publications in June

EVENTS in MAY:
*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Hubert Faustmann,
Sertac Sonan, Esra Aydin, George Isaia
and Christophoros Christophorou*
Seminar - „Corruption in Cyprus“
Date: Thursday, 16th May 2024
Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm (EEST / Cyprus time)
Location: Home4Cooperation



EVENTS in JUNE:
*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Anthi Charalambous
(Director of ideopsis Ltd - Environmental & Energy
Consulting)*
**“Grab A Cypriot Coffee” with
“... Let’s Talk Trash: Circular Solutions for a More
Sustainable Cyprus”**
Date: Thursday, 6th June 2024
Online
Kindly **RVSP** by June 5th at office.cyprus@fes.de to
receive the Zoom link.

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CYPRUS PROBLEM & INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

The month of April started with Nicos Christodoulides being called by DISY and AKEL to convene the National Council over developments on the Cyprus problem after the Greek Cypriot leader stated that he accepted proposals submitted by the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), António Guterres, during their meeting in March 2024. Christodoulides expressed his hope that the proposals would be met positively by Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar.

On April 5, Tatar and Guterres met in New York. Following the meeting, Tatar stated that he stressed to Guterres that unfair embargoes on Turkish Cypriots should be lifted. Tatar also said that it was not possible for negotiations to resume from where they left off in Crans Montana in 2017. Asked whether he would accept to attend a joint meeting with Christodoulides and the UNSG personal envoy, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Tatar responded that unless the Turkish Cypriots sovereign equality and equal international status is accepted, the Turkish Cypriot side does not intend to engage in formal negotiations. He also said he had a constructive meeting with the UNSG and claimed that Guterres had confirmed that no common ground had yet been found that would lead to the resumption of the Cyprus negotiations. Tatar also met the deputy UN Secretary-General responsible for political affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, as well as the UN Permanent Representatives of France, the UK and Russia.

The extraordinary European Council, held in Brussels between April 17 and 18, reaffirmed its full

¹The 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

committed to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. In addition, the EU urged Turkey to engage actively and constructively for a settlement of the Cyprus problem in order to see corresponding progress in Euro-Turkish relations. The Council's conclusions were welcomed by the Greek Cypriot side but were criticised by the Turkish side.

A statement from the Turkish Foreign Ministry stressed that it will never accept an approach that links progress in the Turkey-EU relations to the Cyprus problem and that it is necessary to abandon an understanding which reduces these multifaceted relations to the Cyprus issue. Such a mentality cannot make a positive and constructive contribution to the problem, nor to the other regional and global issues, the statement outlined. Also critical of the outcome of the discussions at the European Council was the Foreign Ministry of the TRNC,¹ which directly accused the EU of being mainly responsible for the current situation of the Cyprus problem.

On April 24, the Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister, Ünan Üstel, announced that the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) had started paying out compensation for applications finalised until 2020. Acknowledging the criticisms against the commission in recent years, Üstel assured that significant efforts had been made to address these concerns. He revealed that a total of nearly 200 applications, which had been concluded without any disputes, would receive compensation amounting to approximately £68m. Üstel assured that the payment of these fi-

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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nalised applications had commenced and would be completed within the next few months. The IPC was set up in 2006 in accordance with the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Xenides-Arestis v. Turkey. The purpose of this measure was to establish an effective domestic remedy for claims relating to Greek Cypriot properties in the northern part of the island. The IPC examines claims for restitution, compensation, and exchange. As of May 2024, 7,580 applications have been lodged with the IPC and 1,760 of them have been concluded. The IPC has awarded £443.321.501 to the applicants as compensation. Moreover, it ruled for exchange and compensation in two cases, for restitution in five cases and for restitution and compensation in eight cases. In one case it delivered a decision for restitution after the settlement of Cyprus issue and in another it ruled for partial restitution.

On April 27, Christodoulides expressed his disappointment over leaks from members of the National Council a day after it was convened to brief party leaders on the latest developments regarding the Cyprus problem. Reportedly, the leaks concerned a tripartite or five-partite conference proposed by Guterres, which the Turkish Cypriot side rejected. The TRNC Foreign Ministry described as fake news the Greek Cypriot media claiming that Guterres made such a proposal that the Turkish Cypriot side rejected.

On April 29, Holguín was in Brussels to meet with the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and the European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa Ferreira. Holguín was expected to return to Cyprus at the beginning of May.

A bicomunal event would be held to mark May 1, Labour Day, outside the Ledra Palace hotel in Nicosia's buffer zone. The event was being organised by Cypriot trade unions that are members of the World Federation of Trade Unions: PEO, DEV-IS, KTAMS, KTOS, KTOEOS, BES, KOOP-SEN, and DAU-SEN.

On April 22, renovation work began at the abandoned mosque in the village of Alektora / Gokagac, in the Limassol district. The work's commencement was announced by the Ali Tuncay, the Turkish Cypriot co-chair of the bicomunal technical committee on cultural heritage, and it is being carried out with the technical support from the United Nations Development Programme and European Union funding. The village, which is located in the south, was almost exclusively inhabited by Turkish Cypriots until the outbreak of intercommunal violence in the 1960s.

HYDROCARBONS

On April 22, the Minister of Energy, George Papanastasiou, stated that EXXONMOBIL had identified promising drilling targets in blocks 5 and 10 and intends to carry out exploration drilling this year and in 2025. He indicated there are hopeful signs for discoveries. On the Aphrodite gas play in Block 12, Papanastasiou said the government was awaiting the concession holders to submit their revised development plan. He also revealed that the dispute with Israel over the Yishai reservoir should be resolved within the next three months. Speaking about the Great Sea Interconnector, formerly the EuroAsia Interconnector, Papanastasiou stated that the cable project costing €1.9bn is expected to be operational in 2029. As it stands, Cyprus will bear 63% of the cost, and Greece 37%.

According to energy expert Charles Ellinas, without a change in climate policy and technological progress, natural gas and LNG would continue to play a substantial role in balancing intermittent renewables and meeting the expected growth in future global energy demand, led by Asia and Africa. Regarding EXXONMOBIL's strategy to build a liquefaction plant for LNG exports, Ellinas noted that commercial viability of such a plant improves with two or three liquefaction trains while such a plant could

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also accommodate Israeli gas, if it is still available for export. Assuming successful discoveries, the earliest this could happen is by the end of this decade or early in the next. The project would also depend on global markets and prices, and the speed at which the energy transition progresses.

On April 30, Christodoulides met with ENI CEO Claudio Descalzi in Nicosia where they discussed prospects over gas findings. They also reviewed the discoveries that the Italian firm and its French partner TotalEnergy made in 2022 in Cronos and Zeus, which led to the drilling of the Cronos 2 appraisal well in late 2023.

GREEK CYPRIOTS

Gender Developments

The Cyprus Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KEVE), in conjunction with the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry, and the Cyprus Youth Organisation (ONEK), announced the second call for proposals for the New Entrepreneurship Support Scheme. The total budget allocated for the scheme amounts to €20m. According to the announcement, the scheme aims to foster, support, and promote entrepreneurship, with a particular emphasis on specific demographic groups such as young individuals and women seeking to engage in entrepreneurial activities across various economic sectors.

Out of the 63 candidates running in the European parliament elections, only 18 were women.

Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

On April 19, KEVE announced a call for at least 1,800 small and medium sized enterprises to participate in the EENergy project. The call, open until May 15, 2024, invites small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to submit proposals to develop action plans

with support from the Sustainability Advisors of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). These plans are designed to help SMEs achieve a minimum 5% improvement in their energy efficiency. Of these, 900 SMEs will be selected to receive direct financial support, in the form of grants. Funded by the European Union's Single Market Programme (SMP), the project will be implemented with the support of EEN.

On April 25, the Bank of Cyprus announced the successful launch and pricing of €300m in green senior preferred notes. According to the announcement, the transaction represented its inaugural green bond issuance in line with the group's Beyond Banking approach, aimed at creating a stronger, safer and future-focused bank and leading the transition of Cyprus to a sustainable future. Furthermore, the bank explained that an amount equivalent to the net proceeds of the notes will be allocated to eligible green projects as described in the bank's sustainable finance framework, which includes green buildings, energy efficiency, clean transport and renewable energy.

In a press release issued by KEVE, the Nicosia Tourism Board announced on April 29 that it is participating with a consortium in the "GreenHost" project. The project aims to boost vocational excellence and foster management skills adapted for reducing the environmental footprint of the hospitality industry. ETAP Nicosia will work with partners from seven countries, including Greece, Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, Slovenia and Portugal, to promote innovation and sustainable tourism. The GreenHost Project is financed by the European Union with a total budget of €2.5m and a duration of 48 months from March 15, 2024 to March 14, 2028.

A Senior Officer from the Cyprus Stock Exchange, Eliza Stasopoulou, released analysis underlining how important it is for companies to implement corporate governance and social responsibility pol-

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icies. “The combination of Environment, Society, and Governance (ESG) has become more pressing, and companies are expected to act responsibly for the benefit of society”, Stasopoulou explained. Some of the issues possibly covered by ESG include pollution emissions, waste management, ethical operational methods, equal opportunities in employment, and community involvement. According to Stasopoulou, the Cyprus Stock Exchange, through the corporate governance code it has prepared and which most listed companies have applied, has added a special provision urging companies to incorporate ESG policies, demonstrating their stance on the societal and environmental issues of the communities in which they operate.

Domestic Developments

A spat erupted between Auditor-General Odysseas Michaelides and the Law Office of Cyprus. On April 22, the Audit Office moved to report the Law Office to the European Commission and the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (Intosai) amid allegations of threats, revenge, and efforts by Deputy Attorney General Savvas Angelides to remove the Auditor-General from his post. The Audit Office accused Angelides of conflict of interest for moving to acquit a client of his former law firm from criminal prosecution. The Law Office filed proceedings over Michaelides’ post, on the premise of inappropriate behaviour. Michaelides has been given until May 17 to object to the case brought to the Supreme Constitutional Court to have him removed from his role. Both the Audit Office and the Law Office are independent institutions and, as such, their heads cannot be fired and are appointed for life. They can only resign, or the Supreme Court can decide that they must be removed from their post, as was done with former deputy Attorney General Rikkos Erotocritou. Christodoulides had attempted to prevent a case being filed for the removal of Michaelides, and he has received criticism for his neutral stance on the matter from some quarters, including from AKEL leader Stefanos Stefanou.

In a poll conducted by CYMAR Market Research Ltd on behalf of ANT1 ahead of the upcoming European elections on June 9, right-wing DISY emerged as the frontrunner (18%). The lead is closely contested by left-wing AKEL (16%). In third place for entering the European Parliament is far right ELAM (10%), with the Democratic Party (DIKO) coming fourth (8%), and socialist party EDEK (4%) fifth. VOLT garnered 2% while the GREENS party and DIPA got 1% each. Undecided votes stood at 22%, abstention at 8%, while those who refused to answer comprised 8% “. A total of 63 people submitted their candidacies on April 24. Only two were independent candidates, including Fidas Panayiotou, a young YouTuber and influencer. There were also three Turkish Cypriot citizens of the Republic among the candidates.

Lawyers representing former President Nicos Anastasiades have filed a €2m lawsuit against journalist and writer Makarios Drousiotis at the Nicosia District Court accusing him of making “malicious, false, and defamatory claims” in his books Mafia State and The Gang. Drousiotis issued a statement calling the lawsuit “a distracting manoeuvre before his upcoming deposition before the anti-corruption authority.”

Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

On April 5, the branch of ASDYK (independent Union of Civil Servants of Cyprus) covering the police issued a statement condemning what they termed as “a completely arbitrary and unilateral decision” by the Police Headquarters and the Ministry of Justice and Public Order to not pay remuneration to its members. The Union highlighted several grievances including the hiring of 300 contract police officers to guard the Green Line without securing European funds and the imposition of additional duties in the shift system without overtime pay.

Additionally, on the same day, discussions continued regarding the multiple pensions received by state of-





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officials. The proposal outlined in a new bill suggested increasing the lump sum payments while forgoing a pension, essentially prepaying the pensions for nine years. More specifically, while ministers and deputy ministers who complete two terms receive €4200 per month in pension and the one-time amount of €235,000, the proposal increase the lump sum to €552,000 but without a pension. All state officials such as parliamentarians, presidents, and ministers are remunerated in a similar manner.

Moreover, on April 5, the EQUALITY trade union requested the postponement of parliamentary discussions on modernizing the legislative framework for annual and sick leave in the public sector. They argued that despite representing a significant number of workers, they were excluded from the consultation process. According to the union, the employer discussed the content of the regulations only with the Pancyprian Trade Union of Public Servants (PASDY) without involving other unions. Furthermore, the EQUALITY stressed that, if the discussion is not postponed, it reserves the right to appeal to the Ministry of Justice, the institutions of the EU, the Council of Europe and the International Labour Organisation. Indicatively, the new regulations seek, among other things, to reduce the number of days of annual sick leave from 42 to 28 and to reduce sick leave without a medical certificate from eight to six days. According to the new regulations, the total limit of accumulated leave days would also be reduced from 70 to 58 for a five-day work week and from 84 to 72 for a six-day work week.

On April 10 at the PEO Pancyprian conference, General Secretary Sotiroula Charalambous highlighted growing social inequalities despite high economic growth rates. Ms. Charalambous emphasised that the distribution of wealth remains uneven, while high prices and high interest rates aggravate the situation. Collective agreements were emphasized as essential for improving real wages, particularly regarding initial hiring wages.

On the same day, Bank Employees of Cyprus Union (ETYK) approved a proposal from the Minister of Labour to renew the collective agreement with Hellenic Bank, ending a stalemate dating back to 2018. The significant difference with the other banks is the bank's obligation to include the employees of the former Cooperative Bank in the salary scales of the rest of the staff so that there are no differences after it acquired the Cooperative Bank in 2018.

On April 17, the Association of Mechanical and Electrical Contractors of Cyprus (SEMIEK) announced a 24-hour warning strike to advocate for collective agreements, wage increases and to demand the signing of a sectoral agreement that will cover all workers after the recent deadlock with the employers.

Social partners reached an agreement regarding the employment of workers from third countries. The agreement is focusing on three components and will form the framework for the revision of the Strategy for the Employment of Third Country Nationals adopted in 2023. More specifically, the social partners agreed to upgrade their cooperation through the operation of a Tripartite Advisory Committee; to improve the living conditions of foreign workers by establishing appropriate living standards; and to utilize and update the existing strategy for the employment of workers from third countries. According to the Minister of Labour, the committee will meet immediately after Easter to start implementing the provisions of the agreement.

On April 23, the Minister of Labour announced a legislative recall concerning student internships focusing on employment conditions, social security and salary determination.

On April 25, the Parliamentary Committee of the Interior convened to discuss bills and regulations concerning the criteria and conditions for highly skilled third country nationals to enter and reside in Cyprus.

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The EU Directive updates the previous rules on the blue card, establishing a legal migration framework in the EU to address skills shortages. Requirements for highly skilled employment include certification through higher education studies or significant professional skills. Proposed amendments aim to reduce the minimum wage threshold, shorten the minimum duration of an employment contract to six months instead of twelve, introduce the right for International Protection Holders staying in the EU and strengthen the rights of blue card holders, including mobility to other EU countries. It is noted that the Republic of Cyprus is already late in harmonising the legislation with the relevant Directive, as a result of which it is at risk of sanctions.

On April 26, the Minister of Labour announced a 6-measure package to combat undeclared work. More specifically, efforts will be focused on increased inspections, coordination between the Labour Inspectorate and the Police Immigration Department, IT system interconnection, the identification of illegal employment among third-country nationals, informational campaigns, and combating employer involvement with illegal human traffickers. At the same time, the minister proposed bills for taking an electronic census of all employees and imposing higher fines for cases of undeclared work.

Earlier this year, an IMF Staff Discussion Note explored Generative AI's potential to reshape the world of work, labour markets and the global economy. More specifically, the note highlights that the impact of artificial intelligence will be different in less developed economies and concludes that certain groups will make better use of its benefits (e.g., educated women, young people) and that the effects of artificial intelligence most probably will affect lower skilled occupations more with the risk of increasing inequality. Cyprus ranks 21st in the EU's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI).

A further decrease in the number of registered unemployed persons was observed, reaching the lowest levels of August 2008, according to the figures of the Statistical Service. In March 11,476 (taking into account seasonal variations) people were registered as unemployed. Employment in the public and broader public sectors remains significant, reaching 54,751 people, of which 23,208 are employed in the public service, 17,617 in educational services and 13,926 in the security forces.

TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 95.6% higher in April 2024 compared to April 2023. Consumer prices had risen by 5.9% in April alone; the inflation rate in the first four months of 2024 has already reached 23%. The monthly food inflation was down -2.12%. The highest monthly inflation was in the "leisure" segment where an increase of 19.48% was recorded; the second highest was "hotels and restaurants" segment with 16.15%.

Ministry of Tourism statistics show a 35% increase in tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2024, rising from 338,086 in 2023 to 456,353. Arrivals from Turkey increased by 41.6%, while arrivals from other foreign countries rose by 10%. Among these countries, Iran led with 11,661 visitors, followed by Russia (7,761) and Germany (7,682). The downward trend in African student arrivals, observed in 2023, continued in the first quarter of 2024, with significant drops for Nigeria (from 2,145 to 1,039) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (from 672 to 277). In contrast, the number of arrivals (including Greek Cypriots) via crossing points in the same period saw a slight decrease of 0.2%, dropping from 1,078,058 to 1,076,366. Similarly, the number of Greek Cypri-

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ot arrivals using the crossing points dipped slightly, going from 674,708 to 674,069. Citizens of Greece (60,746) and the UK (45,367) were the two largest foreign groups using the crossing points to visit the north; there were also 8,154 UK citizens of Turkish Cypriot descent who entered through these points. Finally, the number of overnight stays increased by 31% while the occupancy rate at touristic facilities went up by 23% to reach 33.7%.

Data from the Trade Department reveals a positive trend in TRNC exports for 2023. The overall value surged by 27% compared to 2022, reaching nearly \$160 million. This growth was primarily driven by an 88% increase in exports to Turkey, which amounted to roughly \$127 million in 2023. However, exports to “third countries” declined by 44%, falling from \$58.2 million in 2022 to \$32.6 million. Despite the increase in exports, the TRNC’s huge trade deficit persists. The value of imports reached a record high of \$2.81 billion in 2023, reflecting a 25% rise from the previous year’s \$2.26 billion. On a brighter note, trade conducted under the Green Line Regulation, encompassing goods sold to the southern part of the island, witnessed a positive shift. This trade increased from \$14.77 million in 2022 to \$16.74 million in 2023.

Gender Developments

There is nothing to report in April regarding this topic.

Relations with Turkey

Once again, a Turkish Cypriot citizen, Evrim Hinçal, deputy secretary general of the Social Democratic Party (TDP), was denied entry into Turkey in April while travelling for a family holiday with the Turkish Cypriot mayor of Nicosia. Hinçal was barred entry because his name is on Turkey’s N-82 list. Reportedly, while being on the N-82 list does not mean a person is outright banned from Turkey, those on the list must apply in advance to the Turkish embassy in

their country for pre-clearance to enter the country, and the list is not publicly available, so those on it generally do not find out until they arrive in Turkey. This incident sparked debate in the Turkish Cypriot Parliament. Tufan Erhürman, leader of the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP), said this issue has become a serious problem damaging relations between the two countries. The government acknowledged the issue and confirmed requests for information from Turkish authorities but added that they did not receive any answer.

Domestic Developments

Erhan Arıklı was re-elected as the chairperson of Rebirth Party (YDP) at its fourth General Assembly held on April 28. Arıklı secured a comfortable victory with 1,956 votes compared to 1,190 for his only rival, Talip Atalay who is the secretary general of the party. With two seats in the parliament (held by Arıklı and Atalay), YDP is one of the two junior coalition partners (along with Democratic Party) of the National Unity Party (UBP). The party was established mainly by Turkish immigrants and positioned itself as their champion. According to the report in weekly Cyprus Today, which was based on a TV interview given by the Minister of Interior, Dursun Oğuz, around 500 people are being refused entry to the TRNC every month: 1,462 people from 75 different countries were refused entry in the last three months, although they obtained a transit visa from Turkey, because immigration officers at the points of entry deemed them unsuitable to enter. Another 827 people have been deported from the TRNC in the last five months, the Minister added. Meanwhile, Cyprus Today’s sister newspaper Kibris reported that 2,456 people from 77 countries were caught living in the TRNC without a residency permit between January 2020 and February 2024. Using a freedom of information request to obtain data from the police, Kibris said that 908 of the individuals in question were Nigerian, the single biggest group by nationality. Second on the top-10 list were Turkish





citizens (470), followed by 150 from Congo, 134 from Pakistan, 128 from Bangladesh, 94 from Cameroon, 92 from Zimbabwe, 52 from Syria, 40 from Turkmenistan, and 36 from Liberia. Commenting on the figures, Anti-Human Trafficking and Refugee Rights programme coordinator Deniz Altiok, whose opinions were sought by Kibris on the issue, stated that there is no asylum system in the TRNC, nor is there a protection system for victims of human trafficking. Altiok stated that, if an immigrant or refugee is deemed illegal, they are sent back to their country without questioning.

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 March 2024, 83% of Turkish Cypriots think that things are going in the wrong direction in the country. According to the participants, the three most important challenges faced by the country are economic problems, inflation, and incompetent political leaders, respectively. Also, 59% think that their economic situation will be worse in two years, while 24% think that it will remain the same. Moreover, 69% percent of those who participated in the survey think that the country's economy will get worse in the next two years, while 18% percent think that it will remain the same; only 13% percent think that the TRNC economy will improve. According to the report, in March 2024, the happiness score of the community dropped slightly to 5.94 (out of 10), compared to the score of December 2023, which was 6.32.

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 2.67. 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): "healthcare" (2.96), "transparency of the govern-

ment decisions" (3.30), "accountability of those who govern us" (3.41), and "justice in income distribution" (3.57); the best score, on the other hand, was 5.72, which was in "freedom of thought and expression". The overall score was 4.22, which was the same as the previous one (December 2023). The poll also showed that the least trusted institutions (on a scale of 5) are the government (2.10), the president (2.17), and the parliament (2.29), while the judiciary and the police are the most trusted ones with 3.14 and 3.08, respectively.

Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

According to KTAMS, one of the leading trade unions for public servants, the hunger threshold, the amount needed to maintain a healthy, balanced and adequate diet, for a family of four was 23,644 TL (about €687) as of the end of March, while the minimum wage is 24,000 TL (about €697).

On April 29, Hur-Is Federation announced that it officially applied to the Ministry of Labour to convene the Minimum Wage Determination Commission. Hur-Is represents the workers' side in the Commission. In a written statement, the Federation said that "the Minister himself stated that it was the decision of the Council of Ministers to reflect the cost of living on the minimum wage every four months", adding that "the new minimum wage should be determined to be effective as of May 1". Earlier in the month, one of the other federations, Turk-Sen, voiced a similar demand.





SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Yiannis Charalambous

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.

Enis Porat

Enis Porat is a PhD candidate in International Relations at Cyprus International University, where he works as research fellow at the Center for Cyprus and Mediterranean Studies.

Sertac Sonan

Prof. Dr. Sertac Sonan works in Political Science & International Relations Department at Cyprus International University. He is the Director of the Centre for Cyprus and Mediterranean Studies at the same university.

Stavros Stavrou

Stavros Stavrou holds a Bachelor's degree in History from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Warwick and a Master's in Industrial and Employment Relations from International Training Centre of the ILO in collaboration with University of Turin. His research focuses on the employment relations of migrants and refugees, trade unions, and social inequalities.





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