



## 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!

Newsletter No.  
120  
MAY 22

---

please Follow and visit us on:  
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





## CONTENT

EVENTS, PODCASTS, PUBLICATIONS 3

CYPRUS PROBLEM 4

HYDROCARBONS 4

GREEK CYPRIOTS 5

Economic Developments

Domestic Developments

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

TURKISH CYPRIOTS 8

Economic Developments

Relations with Turkey

Domestic Developments

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

---

Newsletter No.120 MAY 22

please Follow and visit us on:  
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online

2





## FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

PODCASTS in JUNE:  
*No podcasts in June*



PODCASTS in JULY:  
*No podcasts in July*

PUBLICATIONS in JUNE:  
*No publications in June*



PUBLICATIONS in JULY:  
*No publications in July*

EVENTS in JUNE:  
**Grab a Cypriot Coffee: The Cypriot Response to the War in Ukraine with Harry Tzimtras, Director, PRIO Cyprus Center**  
Monday, June<sup>9<sup>th</sup></sup> 2022  
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (EEST)  
Online Event



EVENTS in JULY:  
*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus, Nicos Trimikliniotis, Corina Dimitriou, Katjia Saha, Head of UNHCR (TBC), Olga Komiti, Senior Legal Expert of UNHCR, Ari Sitas, Professor Emeritus Sociology, University of Cape Town, Emmanuel Achiri, President of VOIS and legal scholar*  
**Launch of the FES Reports:**

- **Migration and Asylum during the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Report on Cyprus**
- **The COVID-19 Pandemic and Fundamental Rights: A Report on Cyprus**

Monday, July<sup>11<sup>th</sup></sup> 2022  
07:00 PM - 09:00 PM (EEST)  
Location: Château Status  
**Open to the Public**

---

Newsletter No.120 MAY 22

please Follow and visit us on:  
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





## CYPRUS PROBLEM

On May 19, the bicomunal Technical Cultural Heritage committee announced that contracts have been signed to renovate four more churches and three mosques across the island. The churches are in Sisklipos (Akcecek<sup>1</sup>), Masari (Sahinler), Goufes (Camlica), and Gypsou (Akova) in the north. The mosques are in Larnaca's Kalo Chorio (Vuda), Lefkara and Maroni. The works are due to be completed by the end of 2022 and early 2023.

On May 23, Foreign Minister, Ioannis Kasoulides, met the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Cyprus and head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UNFICYP), Colin Stewart, to whom he expressed his dissatisfaction regarding the decision of Turkish Cypriot<sup>2</sup> authorities to open another stretch of beach in Varosha. According to reports, the stretch being cleared on the Golden Sands beach is for commercial use and stretching 600 metres long. Turkish Cypriot authorities denied that a new stretch of beach is being developed. They instead claimed that the ongoing works concern a piece of land on which a beach was already established in July 2021 and that the works are being carried out for safety reasons. The European Commission spokesman, Stefan de Kersmacher, reiterated the need to avoid unilateral actions in violation of international law and new provocations, which could increase tensions on the island and jeopardize the ongoing efforts to find common ground towards a lasting settlement to the peace process in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

On May 23, Unal Ustel, the north's new Prime Minister, carried out checks at various checkpoints in Nicosia and Famagusta where he was told that the busiest checkpoint is located in Ayios Dometios,

<sup>1</sup> Names in parenthesis include Turkish pronunciations.

<sup>2</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

where 13,000 people cross daily – a rate of traffic similar to that at Tymbou (Ercan) airport. Ustel stated that he wants to see more checkpoints opened and to see improvements to reduce long queues at the current ones. Ustel reportedly cited the important financial benefits offered by the checkpoints. The delays in crossings were blamed on factors such as staffing shortages, high demand and poor layout of the checkpoints. The foreign ministry in the north also claimed short staffing for problems with the operation of the Dherynia check-point crossing.

## HYDROCARBONS

On May 9, Greek oil and gas company ENERGEAN announced the discovery of a commercially exploitable natural gas field in Israel's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with Cyprus being considered as a potential export destination. The company stated that the gas field discovery, dubbed Athena, was confirmed after exploratory drilling took place in the Israeli sea. The company is considering the possibility of exporting the gas to neighbouring markets, including regional and European, through both a pipeline and LNG export facilities, through either Cyprus or Egypt, or both countries at the same time. The EU has been exploring the possibility of increasing gas imports from various markets in order to reduce its reliance on Russian oil and gas.

On May 24, EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, told the World Economic Forum at Davos that new LNG terminals in Greece, Cyprus and Poland will soon become operational and would enhance the EU's energy security. Von der Leyen made the comment while referring to the REPowerEU, a €300bn plan to phase out Russian fossil fuels and

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).





fast forward the EU's green transition.

On May 24, Energy Minister, Natasa Pilides, stated that exploratory drilling for natural gas off Cyprus is now underway by Italy's ENI and France's TOTAL and should take around 60 days. The ENI-TOTAL consortium started exploratory drilling at the Cronos-1 site of the offshore block 6 of Cyprus' EEZ on May 23. Pilides expressed the hope that the development of block 6, where exploratory drilling by ENI in 2018 had already led to the discovery of the Calypso field, would be included in the EU's plans to end reliance on Russia's natural gas. Drilling is scheduled at Cyprus' Aphrodite field by Chevron in the summer months while work to locate natural gas is also expected to be conducted in blocks 5 and 10. Turkey announced that its fourth drilling rig will begin drilling in the Mediterranean in July 2022. The rest of Turkey's drilling fleet is comprised by the Fatih, Yavuz and Kanuni drilling rigs.

## GREEK CYPRIOTS

### Economic Developments

According to data published by the Cyprus Statistical Service corresponding to April 2022, inflation in Cyprus was 8.8%.

In his opening statement of the Central Bank of Cyprus (CBC)'s annual report published on May 20, CBC Governor, Constantinos Herodotou, stated that the magnitude of the impact on the Cyprus economy from the war in Ukraine will depend on the duration of hostilities, and sanctions against Russia. The Governor noted that the bank's December 2021 forecasts for the economy were outdated, due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and that the outlook was highly uncertain. At the same time, he added, inflation is projected to increase significantly in 2022 due to increases in energy prices as well as the broadening of inflationary pressures in food, the categories of services and non-energy industrial goods. Herodotou said the island's economic

growth rate for 2022 has been estimated at 2.3% compared to the initial estimate of 3.6% last December. Inflation for the whole year appears to have doubled the initial estimate due to the negative geopolitical developments. Taking into account those developments inflation in 2022, is expected to rise to around 6.8%, compared to 2.5% estimated in December 2021. At the same time, Herodotou pointed out that the banking sector, on top of challenges related to non-performing loans, now faces risks from climate change and the agreement of countries to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, the rationalisation of banking business models and digitalisation. According to Herodotou, Cypriot credit institutions will participate in a stress-test in 2022 conducted by the ECB on the risks arising from climate change. Meanwhile in 2021, despite continued deleveraging, the size of the banking sector showed an increase, which is due to the increase in their liquidity as a result of the increase in deposits of around €51.5bn in 2021. This is the highest level recorded since the 2013 crisis.

The Bank of Cyprus announced on May 19 that it recorded a profit after tax of €21m during the first quarter of 2022, €13m higher than the corresponding period of 2021. The bank plans to reduce the number of its branches by 25% and workforce by 15% this year. In numbers, this means 500 jobs will go and branches would be reduced from 80 to 60. According to the European Commission's presentation of its 2022 European Semester Spring Package, Cyprus continues to experience excessive macro-economic imbalances. The package which included post-programme surveillance (PPS) reports for Cyprus, noted that the Cypriot economy did well to recover from the financial downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic. However, this will be offset by the negative effects of the war in Ukraine. The Cypriot economy suffered a recession of 5% in 2020, followed by a rise in real GDP of 5.5% in 2021, an improvement over its performance in 2019. The European Commission revised real GDP growth





downwards to 2.3%, 1.8% lower than its previous estimate. The report explained that despite an expectation that economic activity will increase by 3.5% in 2023 with major risks continuing to be present.

According to a report by the Cyprus News Agency (CNA) released on May 23, Lebanese banks are planning to close their branches in Cyprus, following a decision by the Lebanon Central Bank. In total, seven Lebanese bank branches are expected to close, with two branches having already done so in the past, primarily due to the current economic crisis in Lebanon.

Speaking after a House commerce committee on May 24, Deputy Minister of Tourism Savvas Perdios, admitted that the loss of around 800,000 potential visitors from the Russian and the Ukrainian markets represents a significant blow for tourism on the island. The Deputy Minister stated that the goal for Cyprus is to see over two million tourists until the end of the year. Perdios added that interest from abroad in coming to Cyprus remains high and that the first three months of the year had already seen arrivals equivalent to 75% of the total bookings for 2021. According to the statistical service, a total number of 289,335 tourists visited Cyprus in April 2022 more than seven times the 38,226 arrivals in the same month last year. For the period of January to April 2022, arrivals of tourists totaled 534,040 compared to 55,973 in the corresponding period of 2021, 246,556 during the period of January – April 2020, and to 686,783 arrivals during the period of January – April 2019.

On May 25, Cyprus-licensed bank AstroBank announced that it recorded an after-tax profit of €3.3m in 2021, a notable improvement on the €18m loss it sustained in 2020. In addition, AstroBank managed to further derisk its balance sheet by reducing its non-performing exposures (NPE) ratio to 24% as of March 31, 2022. The bank's NPE ratio stood at 30.3% on December 31, 2020, before falling to

25.6% on December 31, 2021.

On May 27, CBC Governor Constantinos Herodotou, projected that an expected rise in interest rates by the European Central Bank (ECB) would be manageable. Herodotou's comments came after a meeting with the executive committee of Cyprus' Workers' Union Confederation (SEK), which raised its concerns and suggestions with regard to the rise in inflation and how to deal with it, as well as the issue of mortgage lending to young couples.

On May 27, the Cabinet approved a €103m package to help households ride out a surge in the cost of living, fueled by sharp increases in energy prices as a result of Russia's invasion in the Ukraine. The much-awaited package is made up of raft measures aiming to help pensioners and vulnerable groups of the population, ease electricity and fuel costs and support farmers and livestock breeders.

#### Domestic Developments

In May, the Covid 19-cases<sup>3</sup> increased from 474,105 to 489,963 cases . The number of deaths attributed to the virus rose from 1,015 to 1,059. Citing the improved epidemiological situation, the cabinet on May 27 abolished the action plan at airports and ports, effectively scrapping coronavirus-related entry requirements. Face masks will no longer be required indoors, with the exception of high-risk areas such as hospitals. The new regime comes into effect on June 1.

On May 12, former Foreign Minister, Nikos Christodoulides, announced his much anticipated candidacy for the February 2023 presidential elections, in a wide-ranging address to the public through a digital media campaign Christodoulides claimed he remains a DISY member but nevertheless chose to contest the presidency from outside the party process which had already decided to support Averof Neophytou. On May 27, opposition AKEL's central committee announced that it has decided to go

<sup>3</sup>The government no longer publishes daily Coronavirus cases or deaths. Instead, it publishes figures on cases and

deaths on a weekly basis. These figures represent the latest published figures of the month, up until May 26.

### Newsletter No.120 MAY 22

please Follow and visit us on:  
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





ahead and support independent candidate, Andreas Mavroyiannis. On May 29, the leader of far-right party ELAM, Christos Christou, also announced that he will be the party's candidate for the elections following a unanimous vote by the central committee of the party. On the same day, New Wave leader Constantinos Christofides, officially announced that he would stand as a candidate. Lastly, independent Charalambos Aristotelous, a thirty-seven-year-old graduate of political sciences, announced his candidacy bringing the line-up of candidates to 10 male politicians.

Independent candidacies also include Achilleas Demetriades, Giorgos Colocassides, Marios Eliades and Christodoulos Protopapas. Observers note that the candidacies of both Neophytou and Christodoulides, threaten to split the island's biggest party. The former foreign minister is ahead of other candidates in recent polls recording a 43% share of the public's vote in the first round against Neophytou's 22.09% and Mavroyiannis' 16.28%. DIKO, DIPA, EDEK and the Greens have still to pick a candidate. Labour Minister, Zeta Emilianidou, suffered a brain aneurism on May 15. When the month came to an end she was still in a medically induced coma and received treatment in Athens. Transport Minister Yiannis Karousos temporarily performs the duties of Labour Minister.

Irfan Siddiq has been appointed as the new British High Commissioner to Cyprus and will assume his appointment from August 2022, replacing High Commissioner, Stephen Lillie.

According to the Interior Ministry spokesman, Loizos Michael, over 16,500 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Cyprus since Russia's invasion on February 24, of whom roughly 10,000 have already sought temporary protected status.

#### Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On May 2, the CEO of the Hellenic Bank sent a letter to the unions SEK, PEO and ETYK, noting that in the context of the submission of the new business plan of the bank submitted to the Ministry of Labor, the re-

duction of staff by 300-350 employees is envisaged. The employees will be terminated as redundant. The unions reacted and made it clear that they will not accept the redundancy process, instead they would accept the established practice of reducing the number of staff through a voluntary exit plan with tax-free compensation of up to €200,000. ETYK (Union of Bank Workers Cyprus), the bank employees trade union, went one step further and threatened to take strike measures in all banks in the Republic of Cyprus, in case the Hellenic Bank will proceed with the terminations. However, the strike measures were suspended and the labor dispute was eventually led to the labor relations department of the Ministry of Labor.

On May 11, the General Assembly of the employees of the company J&P OVERSEAS LTD was held. Dozens of Cypriots working for the company in Saudi Arabia were left unpaid after the company closed. J&P Overseas has not paid salaries, insurance contributions and contributions to the Provident Fund to employees from 2018 until today, despite the efforts made by both employees and trade unions.

The Assembly decided the following actions:

1. Sending a letter (which was originally sent on 8 September 2021, but no response was received), to the parties DISY and EDEK, asking for the scheduling of a meeting with the workers and the Trade Unions.
2. Taking the appropriate actions in order to convene a delegation of the Trade Unions and the employees in the Labor Committee of the Parliament in order to find a way to summon the owners of the company to take part in the dialogue.
3. Sending a letter to the President of the Republic on behalf of the Trade Unions for a meeting that will focus on the problem faced by the workers.
4. Taking measures and carrying out mobilizations in order to put pressure on the company's shareholders.





On May 11, the unions rejected the position of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) to suspend the decision on the National Minimum Wage (EKM) for 2022. The Minister of Labor stated that the establishment of a national minimum wage (EKM) is final and that the social dialogue that has been in place for about a year within the Labor Advisory Body (ESS) has been completed. Moreover, she stated that EKM's official announcement by the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance is expected before the end of the year. She noted that the forthcoming introduction of a national minimum wage will positively affect about 9% of all employees in the private sector, most of whom are employed in the retail sector. However, the new minimum wage excludes domestic helpers, workers in agriculture and livestock as well as seafarers. She added that setting a minimum for all occupations would also help low-income retirees with better pensions in the medium and long term. A committee will be established to determine the fluctuations of the minimum wage based on the parameters suggested by the International Labor Office. Among the parameters that will be taken into account will be inflation, unemployment, productivity and the rate of economic growth.

## TURKISH CYPRIOTS

### Economic Developments

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 98.12% higher in May 2022 compared to May 2021. The consumer prices had risen by 6.63% in May 2022 alone.

The cost of living crisis is expected to deepen after the price of fuel went up by as much as 30% on May 27. According to the Turkish Cypriot weekly Cyprus Today's report, the main opposition CTP deputy (Nicosia) Devrim Barcin, writing on social media, said: "While an employee earning the net [monthly] minimum wage can buy 524 litres of petrol in the south of Cyprus, an employee can only buy 258 litres

of petrol with the net minimum wage in the north ... If we do not identify the problem correctly, we cannot find the right solution ... The problem is the TL..."

According to statistics released by the Tourism Planning Department, the number of tourists increased from 2,268 in 2021, to 132,451 in the first quarter of 2022. As a result, the average occupancy rate of touristic facilities rose from 3.4% in 2021 to 22.5% in 2022. The overwhelming majority of the tourists (76%) were from Turkey.

On May 16, based on the Ministry of Finance data, Standard Kibris, an economy portal, reported that in the first four months of 2022, the TRNC ran a budget surplus of 204.4 million TL (€ 12.3 million). The Ministry of Finance data also showed that "TC Aid and Loans" in the January-April 2022 period remained at "zero" although a contribution of approximately 933 million TL was planned until the end of April.

On May 5, the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce (KTTO) has opened a new representative office in London in a bid to capitalize on the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. The London office is the KTTO's third overseas office; the other two are in Ankara and Brussels.

### Relations with Turkey

The content of the 'Economic and Financial Cooperation Protocol' between Turkey and the TRNC which had been signed on April 14 was finally revealed towards the end of the month. According to the report of Esra Aygin at Cyprus Mail, 'the 53-page protocol starts by declaring that "the island of Cyprus has been a part of Anatolia politically and culturally since 1571". The protocol foresees the financial transfer of 4.25 billion TL (around €240 million) in loans and grants from the Turkish side. In exchange, the Turkish Cypriot side has to introduce certain reforms. In some of the most controversial provisions, the protocol, among others, envisages to:

- 'limit the activities of trade unions by "banning them from engaging in political or ideological







activities that go beyond their reasons of establishment”,

- eliminate disinformation “used by civil society organisations and third countries that targets the TRNC-Turkey relations,” which poses a further threat to the activities of civil society,
- introduce an effective control against disinformation on social media,
- further limit freedom of expression by introducing amendments to the penal law,
- regulate the rules regarding the right of assembly and demonstration to introduce additional punishment “where the right to protest is used beyond the legal definition,”
- make it easier for Turkish nationals to get Turkish Cypriot citizenship “with the aim of increasing cooperation;”
- lift the restrictions on Turkish nationals to acquire property and to invest,
- strengthen the religious affairs department, which is currently under the pious foundation Evkaf, by institutionalising it, in what is perceived widely as an attempt to change the secular character of the Turkish Cypriot community,
- plan to restore the Ottoman and Turkish-Islamic heritage sites “with the aim of consolidating the Turkish presence on the island,”
- plan the building of religious complexes, tekkes and shrines,
- cancel collective agreements for workers; privatise the electricity authority and ports; increase the retirement age; require the Turkish embassy’s permission in replacing retired civil servants; increase taxes,
- increase the use of Turkish lira “which is the national currency;” and reduce the dependency on foreign currencies,
- and “complete all necessary infrastructure and public works to prepare Varosha for daily use”.

The provisions of the protocol attracted the criticism of the opposition parties as well as trade unions

and civil society organizations. ‘Reacting to provisions such as the one that stipulates that “creating discontent or dissent” against the Turkish Cypriot leader is “punishable with up to five years in prison,” the Turkish Cypriot Journalists Association said: “These amendments demonstrate that the aim is to establish an oppressive regime that does away with any kind of criticism. These repressive, reactionary and oppressive amendments will further limit freedom of thought and freedom of expression.” The Turkish Cypriot Journalists Union published a statement saying that the proposed legal amendments are “a huge step taken in the way of becoming the little Turkey”.

On May 31, the Vice President of Turkey, Fuat Oktay, slammed those who criticized the protocol and said that this was “a betrayal of the blood of the martyrs” and a futile effort of those who want to paralyze the functioning of the state. He stated that they decided to send two mobile power plants worth 40 million dollars to the TRNC in order to solve the energy problem.

Police have launched an investigation after a protester was seen holding a placard reading ‘the Occupier Turkey Get Out of Cyprus’ during a protest outside the Turkish Embassy in Nicosia on May 18 (please see the Domestic Developments section for more on this). On May 19, Prime Minister, Unal Ustel, announced that the police will conduct the ‘necessary investigation’ into the matter, and said that while the protests are a part of ‘democratic rights and freedoms’, Turkey is ‘not an occupier/invader’ but the ‘country which brought lasting peace to this island’.

On May 20, Ustel announced that Ankara has transferred 560 million TL (€33.4 million) to help pay off debts to the Turkish energy firm Aksa, which runs the Kalecik (Gastria) power station in Trikomo. The financial aid is being provided as part of the “2022 Economic and Financial Cooperation Agreement” signed between the TRNC and Turkey on April 14.

## Newsletter No.120 MAY 22

please Follow and visit us on:  
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





### Domestic Developments

The National Unity Party (UBP), Democratic Party (DP) and Rebirth Party (YDP) formed a new coalition government on May 12 under the premiership of Unal Ustel (Kyrenia Deputy from UBP) who has no administrative position in the UBP. The UBP leader and former Prime Minister, Faiz Sucuoglu found himself out of the cabinet. Unal Ustel, who had come last among 5 candidates at the UBP Congress held in October 2020, was chosen by the president Tatar to form the new government. It has been widely speculated that Ankara is against the premiership of Sucuoglu.

Both the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) and the People's Party (HP) did not even meet with Ustel, arguing that Tatar's decision to give the mandate to Ustel was not legitimate. CTP and HP boycotted the parliamentary session when the cabinet list of the new government was read out. The new cabinet is as follows:

- Prime Minister: Unal Ustel (UBP)
- Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Environment: Fikri Ataoglu (DP)
- The Minister of Public Works and Transportation: Erhan Arikli (YDP)
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs: Tahsin Ertugruloğlu (UBP)
- The Minister of Finance: Sunat Atun (UBP)
- The Minister of Interior: Ziya Ozturkler (UBP)
- The Minister of National Education: Nazim Cavusoglu
- The Minister of Economy and Energy: Olgun Amcaoglu (UBP)
- The Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources: Dursun Oguz (UBP)
- The Minister of Health: Izlem Gurcag Altugra (UBP)
- The Minister of Labour and Social Security: Hasan Tacyo (UBP)

On May 18, when the vote of confidence was held in the parliament, the main opposition party, CTP MPs held a march and made a press statement. The CTP Chairman Tufan Erhurman, in his statement in front of the Parliament, said, "it is not possible for us to accept these interventions," and described the vote of confidence as "sham" and said that they would say "no". On the same day, a separate protest was held by the parties not represented at the parliament (TDP, YKP, TKP, BKP). Their press statement was read out in front of the Turkish embassy. The statement said that the government was illegitimate as it was formed as a result of [Ankara's] intervention.

On May 26, the HP Chairperson Kudret Ozersay announced his "withdrawing from [his] parliamentary seat". "I took the first step on behalf of the party. This was in line with the HP party assembly decision," Ozersay said, that the other two deputies of HP, Jale Refik Rogers (Kyrenia) and Aysegul Baybars (Famagusta) did not follow suit as of the end of the month. Ozersay cited the "illegitimate UBP-DP-YDP government", which was established against the will of the people and democracy, as the main reason for his withdrawal from the parliament. In essence, he also said that Turkey should respect the TRNC's independence, the will of its people and its democracy. In the 2022 edition of World Press Freedom Index of the Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which assesses the state of journalism in 180 countries and territories, the northern part of the island has slipped from 76th to 81st place. The score of north Cyprus was 61.08 out of 100; the previous year's score was 70.18. The Republic of Cyprus also dropped from 26th to 65th place in the World Press Freedom Index, with an overall score of 65.97 (down from 80.15 in 2021). Turkey was ranked 149th and Greece 108th.

In May, the number of Covid-19 cases increased from 93,263 to 95,030 while the number of deaths attributed to the virus increased from 235 to 238. As of June 1, Covid-19 mask and test requirements have been abolished.

### Newsletter No.120 MAY 22

please Follow and visit us on:  
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





### Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On May 31, the Cyprus Turkish Civil Servants Union (KTAMS) leader Guven Bengihan issued a press statement on behalf of the Communal Existence Platform, which is made up of trade unions, professional organizations and CSOs across the political spectrum. Bengihan said that the member organizations held a meeting and with the belief that communal existence can only be achieved through the joint struggle of all segments of the society, agreed to form a broad unity. He noted that during the meeting the determination to stand up against the “interventions against the will of the people” and to fight together in order to ensure production and fair distribution in the country was emphasized.

According to the figure provided by KTAMS the breadline for a family of four has increased to 7,939 TL (€ 440), which is 1,849TL (€ 103) more than the net monthly minimum wage. The union leader Guven Bengihan pointed out that purchasing power has declined continuously due to the depreciation of the Turkish lira. “Considering that the prices of many goods and services in our country are indexed to foreign currency, we see that the minimum wage earner’s purchasing power has been rapidly deteriorating.”

On May 21, the Cyprus Turkish Primary School Teachers Union (KTOS) held its 43rd Ordinary General Assembly. Mustafa Baybora was elected as the new president while Burak Mavis became the new secretary general. Sener Elcil, the former secretary general, who had served as the secretary general for more than a decade, has announced his retirement.





## FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

### IMPRINT

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Office Cyprus  
20, Stasandrou, Apt. 401  
CY 1060 Nicosia

Tel. +357 22 377 336  
Email: [office@fescyprus.org](mailto:office@fescyprus.org)  
Web-Site: [www.fescyprus.org](http://www.fescyprus.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/FEScyprus](http://www.facebook.com/FEScyprus)  
Twitter: [@fescyprus](https://twitter.com/fescyprus)

Text:  
Hubert Faustmann, Yiannis Charalambous,  
Sertac Sonan, Enis Porat, Gianna  
Chatzigeorgiou and Sophia Papastavrou

Layout:  
Stadtformat Einig & Kazmierczak GbR

If you want to subscribe to this (free) monthly newsletter, please fill in the form on our website:  
[www.fescyprus.org/newsletter/](http://www.fescyprus.org/newsletter/)

If you want to unsubscribe please click the link in your FES Newsletter mail.

---

Newsletter No.120 MAY 22

please Follow and visit us on:  
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online

