



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.
133
JUNE 23





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

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PODCASTS in JULY:
No podcasts in July



PODCASTS in AUGUST:
No podcasts in August

PUBLICATIONS in JULY:
No publications in July



PUBLICATIONS in AUGUST:
No publications in August

EVENTS in JULY:

*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus and Harry Tzimitras
(PRIO Cyprus Centre)*

"Grab a Cypriot Coffee"

**"The Impact of the Elections in Cyprus, Greece and
Turkey on the Trilateral Relations"**

Date: Wednesday, 12th of July 2023

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. (EEST / Cyprus time)

09:00 a.m. - 09:30 a.m. (MEST / Berlin time)

Location: Zoom (Online)

RSVP by Tuesday, 11th of July, 4 p.m. to

Elisabeth.vonBach@fes.de

Zoom link will be shared one day prior



EVENTS in AUGUST:

No events planned so far

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CYPRUS PROBLEM

On June 12, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited the TRNC,¹ making his first visit to the north since his re-election in May 2023. Following a meeting with Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar, Erdoğan stated that the Turkish Cypriot side would return to negotiations only on the condition that the TRNC is recognised. He also made several pledges to the Turkish Cypriot community including an electricity interconnection with the north, development in Famagusta and a new runway at Ercan / Tymbou airport. Tatar stated that he was determined to see Turkey's new two-state policy through to the end.

On June 15, Tatar stated that seeking involvement outside of the UN towards the resolution of the Cyprus problem is pointless without Turkish Cypriot input. Tatar's comments came in response to a series of statements made by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Christodoulides, for a more active EU involvement in efforts to lift the deadlock of the Cyprus problem. Christodoulides' statements were made after his speech at the EU Parliament on June 13 in Strasbourg, but also during visits and contacts at the European Parliament, where he was welcomed by President Roberta Metsola. Christodoulides also spoke on the phone with UN Secretary-General António Guterres, exchanging views on the next steps with regards to efforts to resume the Cyprus negotiations.

In an interview on June 25 with Greek Cypriot newspaper Politis, Germany's ambassador to Cyprus Anke Schlimm, argued that "willingness to compromise" was important to move forward. Earlier in the month, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz criticised

both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides for the lack of movement, saying that political courage from both sides is required for talks to gain momentum. Scholz also stated that Germany remains committed to supporting a resolution of the Cyprus problem through talks under the auspices of the UN.

On June 26, Tatar held a meeting with UN special representative to Cyprus, Colin Stewart. The UN envoy reportedly encouraged Tatar to intensify efforts to try to find a way to establish a permanent solution to the Cyprus problem. Stewart is expected to brief the UN Security Council in early July 2023.

The final text of the European Council Summit, which convened in Brussels on June 29 and 30, made reference to the readiness of the EU to play a more active role in the process of resolving the Cyprus issue. "The European Union calls for the swift resumption of negotiations and stands ready to play an active role in supporting all stages of the UN-led negotiation process with all appropriate means at its disposal", the text stated. Among other things, the EU Council restated its commitment to a comprehensive settlement, within the framework of the United Nations and on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the European acquis.

Turkey announced that it will raise the Cyprus problem at the upcoming NATO summit set to take place in Lithuania between July 11 to 12, as Ankara accused NATO of strengthening the arsenal of the Greek Cypriots. The NATO Summit will be attended by Erdoğan and is expected to be of great importance as regards developments on the Cyprus problem. Bilateral meetings will take place at the summit

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

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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during which the Cyprus problem will be discussed.

On June 30, Tatar relayed to Guterres during a short telephone conversation that EU interference in the Cyprus problem cannot be accepted and negotiations can only begin with the confirmation of the sovereign equality and equal international status of the Turkish Cypriot side. According to media in the north, Guterres stressed that third parties cannot intervene in the Cyprus problem without the consent of the two sides.

BICOMMUNAL RELATIONS

Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar stated that he is pushing for the opening of a new crossing point in the Nicosia village of Mia Milia/Haspolat. Tatar stated that this proposal met a stumbling block when the Greek Cypriot side suggested the opening of a crossing point in Kokkina/Erenkoy, the Turkish Cypriot exclave between Pomos and Kato Pyrgos which is considered a sacred area and functions as a military base.

On June 17, members of LGBTQ+ communities from both sides of the divide came together in celebration of a Pride event hosted in the buffer zone.

On June 23, as part of its third edition of the UNFI-CYP Networking Fair initiative, more than 300 Cypriots from across the divide met at the Ledra Palace Hotel to discuss building bridges through businesses and entrepreneurship.

HYDROCARBONS

On June 8, Energy Minister Giorgos Papanastasiou traveled to London where he met with senior executives from BP and EXXONMOBIL to discuss energy and investments.

On June 14 and 15, Papanastasiou visited Israel where he met with his Israeli counterpart Israel Katz, to discuss development of regional gas infrastructure and strengthening energy cooperation between the two countries. Instead of a 2,000 km EastMed pipeline to continental Europe, a much shorter pipeline of 190 km linking the island to fields offshore Israel was discussed. Once in Cyprus, the gas could be converted to LNG and shipped to Europe. The Cypriot and Israeli ministers also agreed to prioritise the construction of a 310 km electricity interconnector, with an estimated price tag of €500m. The “gas to power project”, as it has been described, is based on the argument that Israel is expected to face a deficit of power in the next few years, while Cyprus does not have storage for excess renewable energy, which at the moment is wasted. Two technical committees appointed by Cyprus and Israel and tasked with putting plans into action on electricity and natural gas projects, are expected to begin contacts in July 2023. Energy expert Charles Ellinas raised questions over the project arguing that Europe does not seem to need new gas sources and is not funding pipeline projects. Instead, Ellinas suggested that attention should be turned to renewables.

On June 27, President Nicos Christodoulides and CEO of Italy’s ENI, Claudio Descalzi, held a meeting in Nicosia where the latest developments were discussed, including Cyprus’ plans with Israel for the transport of natural gas. ENI reportedly viewed the government’s plans positively, given that there are quantities that would justify infrastructure development in Cyprus.

Greece’s independent power transmission operator (IPTO) and the EuroAsia Interconnector concluded a strategic agreement allowing the former to acquire 25% of the EuroAsia share capital. Energy ministers of Cyprus and Greece, George Papanastasiou and Theodoros Skylakakis respectively, welcomed the

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agreement as a significant step towards the completion of the project. The EuroAsia Interconnector is a European project of common interest (PCI) labelled as an EU “electricity highway” connecting the national electricity grids of Israel, Cyprus and Greece through a 1,208 km subsea HVDC cable, considered to be the longest in the world.

GREEK CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

International rating agency Fitch has affirmed Cyprus’ long-term foreign-currency issuer default rating (IDR) at BBB, assigning a Stable Outlook, assuming that fiscal surpluses will continue despite an economic slowdown, whereas the island’s declining public debt trajectory will continue, albeit at a slower pace. Furthermore, the agency revised its projection for economic growth this year to 2.5% from its previous estimate of 2.1%. The affirmation follows the upgrade by one notch to BBB in March 2023.

The Central Bank of Cyprus (CBC) maintained its forecast for this year’s economic growth rate at 2.6%, indicating that the positive developments in private consumption and investments during the first few months of 2023 offset the impact created by the sanctions imposed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. At the same time, in the June macroeconomic forecasts, the CBC slightly revised downward (-0.2 %) the growth rate for 2024 to 2.8%, due to the expected negative impact of the new Russo-Ukrainian sanctions on the business cycle of professional services. However, the forecast for GDP growth in 2025 remained at 3.1%.

According to data released by the CBC, total deposits in May recorded a net increase of €164.8m, reaching €52bn. In addition, loans saw a net increase of €90.6m, reaching €25.1bn.

Hellenic Bank released its financial results for the first quarter of 2023, posting a profit of €69.7m.

On June 27, Finance Minister Makis Keravnos stated that he expected more action from banks to absorb increasing interest rates. The finance minister said he had made a constructive intervention in the banking sector, illustrating to banks and the banking association the corporate social responsibility they have as large institutions to absorb part of the costs arising from the increase in interest rates.

On June 28, the cabinet decided that the reduced rates of tax on motor and heating fuels will be scrapped by the end of the month. The price of petrol was set to rise by 8.32 cents per litre and heating fuel by 6.38 cents. The higher cost of fuel raised concerns among petrol station owners that the development will lead more people to fill up with cheaper petrol in the north, with the sector protesting and pressing the government to prevent that route.

One-third more visitors arrived in Cyprus in May 2023 compared to May last year. According to official statistics, 420,076 people arrived in May 2023 in comparison to 315,018 of May 2022. From January to May 2023, total arrivals were estimated at 1,156,705 compared to 849,058 in the corresponding period of 2022, an increase of 36.2%. Arrivals from the UK were the main source of tourism in May 2023, with 36.6% (153,797) of total arrivals, followed by Israel with 8.9% (37,442), Poland with 7.3% (30,835), Germany with 6.2% (25,916) and Sweden with 5.2% (21,837).

Domestic Developments

On June 15, the government announced plans for the creation of a new deputy ministry of migration and asylum with an aim to address the issue of migration and offer better protection to those legally migrating to Cyprus.

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Interim measures to deal with issues in the management of Turkish Cypriot properties were announced by the interior ministry on June 23 after more mismanagement claims surfaced during a house audit committee meeting. The measures include:

- the establishment of an internal audit unit to examine rental agreements on Turkish Cypriot commercial plots;
- the preparation of a list of all Turkish Cypriot agricultural land, which will be submitted to the Cyprus Agricultural Payments Organisation (KOAP) to check whether the agricultural properties rented are declared by beneficiaries or there are signs of illegal subletting;
- the purchase of services from private surveyors or appraisers to carry out work such as measurements, determination of areas and rents.

On June 20, the President held a press conference on the occasion of his first 100 days in office. Christodoulides, among others, referred to moves that are underway to improve bicomunal ties and stated that a plan to address the housing crisis and a mechanism towards greater government accountability will be established. Nevertheless, the President received harsh criticism by opposition parties. AKEL stated that major changes are needed to address serious social problems rather than amending the previous ten years of government. DISY said that there is a general numbness among the public over some unfortunate actions and broken promises from the government. Christodoulides also received heavy criticism about persons who are very young, supposedly unqualified and with ties to him' being given government positions, including a 19-year old who was appointed as an advisor to the deputy tourism minister.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On June 1, the Union of Hotel and Leisure Center Employees SYXKA-PEO (the hotel employee branch

of the umbrella organisation of the left-wing trade union PEO) threatened to take dynamic measures in the event that action is not taken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance to prevent the deregulation of labour relations in the tourism industry as derived from the Employment Strategy for workers from third countries. The strategy aims to cover hotel employees in addition to delivery drivers. In the letter, PEO stated that they expect a political decision to be made and that any agreement reached must oblige all e-commerce companies and fleet managers to implement it in order to secure work permits for workers from third countries. The General Secretary of PEO stated that they have brought complaints to the Minister of Labour about the very long hours that workers from third countries work and that their employers break the law and regulations. The Ministry was also asked to ensure that inspections are carried out, given that workers from third countries are vulnerable and precarious. The rest of the unions also expressed concerns about the strategy, with SEK denouncing the mass provision of work permits without taking into account the needs for human resources. DEOK (the trade union linked with social democratic party EDEK) highlighted the complete absence of dialogue with the social partners. On the other hand, OEB (Federation of Employers and Industrialists) consider that there has been sufficient dialogue and that the necessity for human resources makes the issue urgent. Despite this, requests for the employment of third country nationals have decreased by 28.5% in the last period, according to data submitted by the Minister of Labour. In the context of the discussion of the employment strategy of workers from third countries, the Minister of Labour stated that from March 1 to May 15, 2023, a total of 2,084 requests were submitted, compared to 2,915 in the corresponding period last year. Most requests concern the catering, construction, and agriculture sectors, while requests from hotels have reduced compared to previous years. It is noted that the employment

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of a large number of third country nationals in hotel units, even on the frontline, was an issue of conflict between employers and trade unions during the discussion of the strategy.

On June 4, city taxi drivers warned that they would proceed to mobilise and/or strike, because of the many pirate Uber-style taxis that operate through mobile applications. The Pan-Cypriot Federation of City Taxis reported the existence of illegal taxi drivers to the road transport department with tangible evidence, without any action being taken by the department. The problem of pirate taxis dates back to the last ten years, according to the federation's president. He explained that these drivers operate through apps, giving prices to customers for private cars and that there are more than 200 taxis operating this way. Pirate taxis are not the only problem faced by professional taxi drivers. The issue of parking at airports is also an important problem that is being partially caused by these informal taxis.

On June 8, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance submitted to the Council of Ministers proposed legislation that will regulate remote work in the private sector before the House of Representatives adjourns for the summer holidays. In relation to the public sector, the issue of remote work will receive further consultations between PASYDY and the Ministry of Labour. Important issues in the proposed legislative regulation of remote work are the provision of safety measures, both for employees and for businesses, regarding their data security, employment contracts, etc. It is noted that the framework of the upcoming law in relation to remote work was examined by a technical committee which was established with the agreement of all social partners, within the framework of the Labour Advisory Body (ESS) around the end of 2021. A draft of the upcoming bill is essentially identical with the relevant law that has been applied from 2021 in Greece. It is based on the principles of the institutional frame-

work which the social partners at the EU level had agreed in 2002. This framework was ratified by the European trade unions and the European employers' organisations.

On June 8, three labour issues were put on the discussion table during the meeting of the President of the Republic with the PEO leadership. A relevant memorandum was submitted to the President. At the meeting, CoLA, the extension of collective agreements, pension issues and the regulation of the strategic employment of workers from third countries were discussed. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for the state to intervene with measures to stop the phenomenon of labour deregulation, due to cheap labour of which employers often take advantage. At the same time, the state should intervene to expand collective labour agreements. With reference to the regulation of the strategic employment of workers from third countries, PEO emphasised that the strategy is problematic because it essentially enables the collective labour agreements not to be applied to workers from third countries. The issue of tax reform, the need to expand the housing policy with social housing programmes, and issues related to GESY were also discussed.

On June 9, at the meeting of the SEK trade union with the President of the Republic, the need to expand the institution of collective agreements was discussed in an effort to support all employees in terms of both quality and dignity in employment. The issue of increases of wages, but also of other benefits, was also raised, giving particular emphasis to the institution of CoLA, but also to welfare funds. Emphasis was also placed on the need to revise the strategy for the employment of workers from third countries in an effort to support the local workforce.

On June 9, the Union of Cypriot Pensioners (EKYSY) met with the Director General of the Ministry of Energy, Trade and Industry, Marios Panagidis, request-

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ing the inclusion of low-income pensioners among the beneficiaries of the 20% discount on electricity consumption and other compensatory benefits. EKYSY announced afterwards that Panagidis gave a negative answer and stated that the government aims to reduce the price of electricity in other ways.

On June 9, 13 months after the expiration of the collective agreement in the construction industry, negotiations between contractors and unions, both directly and through the mediation of the Department of Labour Relations, appear to be deadlocked. The renewal of the collective agreement in the construction industry concerns approximately 40,000 workers in all construction-related sectors and other contractors of important private sectors, such as hotels, retail, pharmaceuticals companies, and industry in general. The collective agreement expired on May 31, 2022, and the trade unions are asking that the new collective agreement be valid for only two years, i.e. until May 2024, as opposed to the previous one which lasted for four years. The employers' side has said that the requests submitted by SEK, PEO and DEOK trade union organisations for legislative regulation of wages would, if granted, increase the already burdened labour and operating costs of the contracting companies. The trade unions, for their part, are defending their request for legislative regulation of wages in order to prevent, as they say, the "disorder" expressed by even a minority of contractors, who do not even respect what was agreed by the previous collective agreements. As far as the financial demands are concerned, the three unions are asking for the full restoration of wages which had been reduced since 2013 due to the financial and banking crisis. The unions are also demanding an increase in the tip rate for all categories of workers from 8% to 11%. They are asking for an extension of 24 months from the date of signing the renewal of the collective agreement, so that all workers in the construction industry can take the appropriate actions to obtain the relevant professional certifica-

tions. The trade unions also propose that the articles of the collective agreement referring to the minimum wages for all categories of workers be included in the existing legislation as well as the obligation of contractors who undertake the execution of any work to be covered by the collective agreement, as provided by the relevant legislation. The contractors are calling for a change in the definition of newly entrant general duty workers and the introduction of new entrant special duties with a wage to be determined by the National Minimum Wage. They suggest that the holidays during the summer season are two consecutive weeks and preferably include August 15. The balance that will result after determining the Christmas and Easter holidays should be given upon the employees' request. With regard to the medical care fund, the employer side requests that the relevant article be deleted from the moment that all employees have joined the National Healthcare System (GeSY). They also request a change in shift working hours from 7.5 hours to 8.

On June 15, by decision of the Council of Ministers, the "chronic problem" of employing teachers in the 14 educational programmes of the Ministry of Education under the status of the "purchase of services" was solved. This status will be abolished from September 2023 and the teachers who will be employed for some programmes will come through the waiting lists of appointees. For the rest of the programmes, the status of "employee" will be given especially for the school year 2023-2024. The trade unions OEK-DY SEK and PASEY PEO said that their ten-year struggle was justified as the Council of Ministers decided to abolish the employment status of purchase of services in its programmes from next September. The trade unions also welcomed the announcement of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance for the salaried employment of teachers in the afternoon programmes.

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TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 65.4% higher in June 2023 compared to June 2022. Consumer prices had risen by 11.4% in June alone. The biggest monthly inflation was in “education”, where an increase of 63.1% was recorded; the drastic rise was due to the rise in private school fees, which was announced in June for the upcoming academic year. Prices in “leisure and cultural activities,” “restaurants and hotels” and “transportation” went up by 18.3%, 18% and 13.4% respectively. The monthly food inflation was recorded as negative (-0.6%).

On June 14, the Prime Minister Ünal Üstel announced an economic relief package following the recent loss in value of the Turkish Lira against major currencies. The main element of the package was a complete elimination of VAT on several basic food and hygiene items such as locally produced dairy products, eggs, bottled water, nappies, all women’s sanitary products, and pet food. VAT will also be reduced to zero on tickets sold by charities and NGOs. The package includes loan restructuring for those having difficulty keeping up with repayments in foreign currency. The PM also announced plans to give tenants whose rental agreements are in set in foreign currency some support (3% of their rent). Üstel also said that a previously announced low-cost mortgage scheme for first-time home buyers will be available as of July. He added that due to the pre-election restrictions for the by-election, the “full package” of support would be in place only by the middle of July.

Following the slump of TL, the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) once again, in a parliamentary debate, called for switching to a

“stable currency-indexed accounting” system based on the euro. In response, the Finance Minister, Alisan San, said that since one-third of the TRNC’s budget is financed by Turkey switching to a different currency would “not be feasible”. Furthermore, he said that the Greek Cypriot authorities refused to help to exchange the €1.5 million-worth of damaged banknotes which the TRNC Central Bank collected from the market, and added: “Imagine what will happen ... when we need millions of euros.” The Economy Minister Olgun Amcaoğlu, who also spoke during the debate, said: “Our manufacturers, who sell goods to the other side [of Cyprus] within the framework of the Green Line Regulation, are in trouble. Despite all of the EU’s warnings, they will not open [bank] accounts for these people.”

Relations with Turkey

On June 6, a package of grants and loans to the TRNC worth up to TL 9.5bn has been approved by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The “2023 Turkey-TRNC Economic and Financial Cooperation” agreement was signed between the TRNC Prime Minister Ünal Üstel and the then Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay on March 31. Under the protocol, the TRNC government aims to reduce the country’s budget deficit, improve its economy, transport and energy infrastructure, as well as increase employment opportunities.

Speaking to the CNN Turk news channel on the day Erdoğan was sworn-in as Turkey’s President, the TRNC President Tatar said that the re-election of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is of great importance for the continuation of the TRNC’s national policy of pursuing a two-state solution in Cyprus.

During a joint news conference with the Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar in Nicosia, the Turkish President Erdoğan said that, in a meeting attended also by the Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister and min-



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isters from both countries, they discussed bilateral ties. “Undoubtedly, among these issues, the supply of electricity from Turkey to the TRNC via cables will be our most important step,” Erdoğan said. Referring to projects in the TRNC that Turkey is supporting, Erdoğan added: “We will ensure that our citizens here receive the same public health services as our citizens in Turkey.” He also announced that the construction of 1,192 social housing units in the Derynia will begin in the coming days. Erdoğan also noted that Turkey has built a total of 630 km of main roads in the TRNC to date and the construction of five separate road projects with a total length of 62 km was ongoing. Reminding that they will make the water supplied from Turkey via the undersea pipeline available to producers for agricultural irrigation purposes soon, Erdoğan said they will shortly launch a tender for the planned new 500-bed state hospital in Nicosia and that his Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz will coordinate the work on this. With regards to the long-delayed opening of the new Ercan (Tymbou) airport, Erdoğan said he would send Yılmaz to the TRNC “as soon as possible” to help resolve any issues so the new airport would be opened on July 20.

Domestic Developments

The TRNC recorded its lowest-ever turnout for a parliamentary election when slightly less than 30% (29.92%) of the electorate voted in a by-election, which was held for a single (Nicosia) seat in Parliament on June 25. Sami Özusu, a journalist, who ran on the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) ticket, comfortably won the election by garnering 43.7% of the votes and beating his main rival Ali Basman of the senior partner of the ruling coalition, National Unity Party (UBP), who secured 38% of the votes. The by-election took place to fill a Nicosia seat vacated by People’s Party leader Kudret Özersay, who quit as an MP last year. However, because voters in the TRNC can vote for candidates outside their constituencies in a parliamentary election, polling stations and ballot boxes had to be set

up across the country, with some 210,000 people eligible to vote; less than 63,000 voted. The turnout in the last general election held in 2022 was 57.4%. With the election of Özusu, the CTP increased its seats from 18 to 19 in the 50-seat parliament. The UBP has 24, its coalition partners DP and YDP have 3 and 2 respectively, along with 2 independent MPs who were dismissed from the People’s Party when they refused to resign along with the party leader Kudret Özersay.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

The Cyprus Turkish Public Officials Union (KTAMS) stated that as of May 31, the poverty threshold for a family of four was 14,454 TL (€663), 2,654 TL (€122) above the (net) minimum wage which stands at 11,800TL (€541). In a written statement, KTAMS said the gap between the minimum wage and the poverty threshold is gradually widening and that minimum wage earners have been condemned to hunger [mainly due to the rise in cost of living; the inflation rate for the first five months of the year was announced as 19.64%]. “The Minimum Wage Determination Commission should convene urgently and set a new minimum wage”, the statement said.

Cyprus Turkish Secondary Education Teachers’ Trade Union (KTOEOS) sent a message to the school administrations where they asked them to make sure that in line with regulations “the student number in each class not exceed 26 students”, and “registration fees which are not legal are not charged”. The letter, which was shared with the wider public, also pointed out the problems of “overcrowded classrooms”, “lack of orientation for students who do not speak Turkish”, absence of planning for “earthquake-proof schools”, and budget shortages in general.

Press Workers’ Union (Basin-Sen) organised a demonstration and read out a press statement in front of the President’s office to protest increasing pressure against members of the press and the

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decision to prohibit the journalist Serhat Incirli, a columnist of Yeniduzen newspaper and TV programmer at Sim TV, to attend the press conference held at the President's office following a meeting between the Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and the Turkish President Erdoğan. The statement said, among other things, "Those who do not engage in corruption and theft, do not have a hidden agenda, do not betray their own society, do not fear free and independent media. You are afraid!". The press statement was signed by other trade unions as well: Dev-Is, Turk-Sen, Hur-Is, KTOS, KTOEOS, KTAMS, Guc-Sen, Kamu-Sen, Cag-Sen, Koop-Sen, Vergi-Sen, EMU Bir-Sen, Tip-Is, Bes, El -Sen, EMU-Sen, Tel-Sen.





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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.

Gianna Chatzigeorgiou

Gianna Chatzigeorgiou holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Crete and a Master's in Social and Political Theory from the University of Cyprus. Her research interests include issues of collective action and social movements, political violence, social class, and social inequality.

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

Assoc. 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.

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

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

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

Text:
Hubert Faustmann, Yiannis Charalambous,
Sertac Sonan, Enis Porat, Gianna
Chatzigeorgiou and Aileen O'Donoghue

Layout:
Stadtformat Einig & Kazmierczak GbR

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