



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

United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) António Guterres submitted his reports on the state of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the UN's Good Offices on the island. UNSG personal envoy, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar submitted her report to UNSG. UNFICYP Chief, Colin Steward, briefed the UN Security Council.

The European Public Prosecutor's Office opened investigation into Cyprus' contentious Vasiliko liquefied natural gas import terminal project. Chinese-led construction firm CPP-Metron Consortium Ltd terminated its agreement over the project.

Cabinet approved three bills aimed at combating undeclared work.

Net-Zero Industry Act as central pillar of the Green Deal Industrial Plan entered into force.

The EU funding to support the Turkish Cypriot community has reached a total of €688 million since 2006.





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PODCASTS in AUGUST:
No podcasts in August



PODCASTS in SEPTEMBER:
No podcasts in September

PUBLICATIONS in AUGUST:
No publications in August



PUBLICATIONS in SEPTEMBER:
No publications in September

EVENTS in AUGUST:
No events planned so far



EVENTS in SEPTEMBER:
No events planned so far

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CYPRUS PROBLEM & INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

On July 1, the President of the Security Council for the month of July and Permanent Representative of Russia, Ambassador Vasily Nebenzia, stated that the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) personal envoy, María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar (Holguín), has only found that the parties are far away from a compromise solution to the Cyprus problem.

In his latest UNFICYP report on Cyprus, submitted on July 4 and covering the period from December 13 to June 24, UNSG António Guterres expressed his strong concerns over the significant militarisation of the buffer zone, which undermines UNFICYP's peacekeeping efforts. The Secretary-General described the actions as reflective of a rapid military buildup, with both the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Turkish forces seeking to gain a strategic advantage in the buffer zone. Guterres highlighted a record number of violations (303 military violations) in the buffer zone by both sides, particularly the "unabated" number of sophisticated surveillance technology. He stressed the importance of avoiding unilateral actions outside the buffer zone that could escalate tensions and undermine the prospects for resuming talks.

Guterres reiterated his call to both sides to engage in dialogue to resolve their differences, stressing that only through mutual engagement and trust can progress be made towards a lasting solution. The Secretary-General specifically addressed the situation in Varosha, saying that since its partial reopening by Turkish Cypriot authorities in October 2020,¹

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

"it has remained a contentious issue". He underlined the lack of response to the Security Council's call for a reversal of the actions in Varosha. Furthermore, the report revealed that UNFICYP continues to face significant operational challenges, including restrictions on its freedom of movement, highlighting the installation of a 14-kilometre barbed wire fence by the Republic of Cyprus within the buffer zone in 2021 and 2022.

Despite the tensions, the report also recorded moments of cooperation and humanitarian engagement and highlighted the ongoing efforts to promote bi-communal relations and peacebuilding initiatives, including 159 bicomunal events. Guterres stressed the importance of bicomunal contacts and called on the leaders of both sides to support and facilitate such interactions. The report also touched on the sensitive issue of missing persons, noting that the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) had continued its efforts to obtain additional information on the locations of burial sites. In concluding his report, Guterres made a strong call for renewed efforts to de-escalate tensions and to return to the negotiating table.

In his latest Good Offices mission report on Cyprus, the UNSG noted that there is growing frustration over the continued status quo across the island and stressed that the UN will continue to stand with all Cypriots to support them in dialogue in order to forge a common way forward. He commended the technical committees resumption of their meetings and discussions, especially those that had been dormant, the activities that had taken place and the

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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number of projects that had been approved and completed. In particular he noted the Technical Committees on Broadcasting, Crime and Criminal Matters, Crossings, Culture, Environment, and Health. The projects under discussion to extend the Pedieos/Kanlı Dere river path and a renewable solar energy power plant in the buffer zone were mentioned as projects with potential to bring both sides closer. He further urged the two leaders to discuss, agree and implement mutually acceptable confidence-building measures and to encourage contact and cooperation between the two communities.

On July 4, the European Commission's Representation in Cyprus released its 2023 reports on the implementation of the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community and on trade across the Green Line. The Commission's Aid Programme report showed that EU funding to support the Turkish Cypriot community had reached a total of €688 million since 2006. The second report pointed out that the Green Line trade was steadily increasing. "Since 2006, a total of €688 million in EU funding has been allocated to the aid programme, which supports Cyprus' reunification by financing confidence-building measures and supporting the socio-economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community," said the report on the implementation of the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot Community in 2023. "In 2023, €31.7 million was allocated for this purpose," it said. "Thanks to this EU funding, the first three Turkish Cypriot Halloumi/Hellim producers and 15 milk farms were approved under the protected designation of origin (PDO) scheme in 2023," the Commission said. The EU also assisted the Turkish Cypriot community in complying with European food safety and animal welfare standards, a condition for placing products on the EU market. Three EU-funded infrastructure projects were also completed in 2023, including the construction of the Kormakitis Centre for Cooperation, a multicultural event venue available to all Cypriot communities, and the extension

of the Morphou (Güzelyurt) wastewater treatment plant, which has doubled the plant's capacity, safeguarding the environment and public health.

The Green Line report shows that trade across the green line in 2023 increased by 9.6% to a record value of €16 million, adding that 7.1 million authorised crossings were recorded in 2023, steadily increasing from 6.1 million in 2022. "The Commission welcomes the further measures announced by the government of the Republic of Cyprus in January 2024, to admit another six processed foods of non-animal origin to Green Line trade (admitted in April 2024) and to increase staffing and reduce congestion at crossing points", the report said. "These measures will positively contribute to Green Line trade going forward." The year 2024 marks 20 years since the adoption of the EU's Green Line Regulation for Cyprus.

Controversy over the Greek Cypriot authorities' efforts to slow down the construction boom in the north through legal proceedings continued in July. On July 7, a 49-year-old German citizen was arrested at Larnaca Airport on the grounds that she was engaged in the buying and selling of former Greek Cypriot real estate in the TRNC. Reportedly, the German estate agent's arrest was the fourth case concerning the use of former Greek Cypriot properties, following that of Turkish Cypriot lawyer Akan Kursat in December in Rome, whose case against was later dropped; a German estate agent, Martin Josef Rikels (whom Greek Cypriot authorities have charged for his involvement in real estate business in the north); and property developer Simon Mistriel Aykut, who was arrested last month and is currently in central prison in the south pending trial.

A prominent lawyer in the north, Murat Metin Hakki appeared on private TV channel Kibris TV to discuss high-profile arrests in the south related to property dealings in the TRNC and he argued that the Greek Cypriot administration made these arrests to deliv-

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er a “psychological blow” to the TRNC economy, and he suggested the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) as the solution. He highlighted that the quicker the IPC finalises cases, the sooner the issue will be resolved. “Russian, Ukrainian, and Israeli speculators who could not keep their money in south Cyprus as of 2022 flocked to north Cyprus”, he stated. “The Greek Cypriots want to deal a psychological blow to the TRNC economy with these arrests. Construction is the economy’s engine here. They believe that interfering with this will impede economic development. That’s why the people [arrested] are chosen carefully. A lawyer, a contractor, or maybe this time a real estate agent will be chosen. The antidote for all of this is the IPC”, he added. “Finalising more cases will clear a path for the issue. I don’t think that these arrests will be in the hundreds or thousands. The more property that is Turkified, the more legitimate it is.”

To date, over 7,600 applications from Greek Cypriots have been lodged with the IPC, of which around 1,800 have been concluded, resulting in compensation awards totalling approximately £457 million. Speaking at the European Council’s Legal and Human Rights Committee meeting, the Secretary General of the ruling National Unity Party (UBP) and Famagusta MP Ertuğrul Hasipoğlu criticised the Greek Cypriot administration for politicising the property issue through arrests. Hasipoğlu highlighted that while the ECHR recognises the Immovable Property Commission as an internal legal mechanism for resolving property issues in Cyprus, it should not allow the Greek Cypriot administration, a member state, to impose liberty-restricting measures on individuals over disputed properties in the north.

On July 7, in an open letter to media ahead of submitting her report, Holguín, took stock of her tour of duty in Cyprus and urged the two sides, Turkish and Greek Cypriots, to think outside the box, while she also warned of the detrimental effects of negotia-

tions fatigue or dwelling on the past. She argued that a common future would bring great opportunities to all Cypriots and she noted that her commitment will not be over upon submission of her report.

On July 10, Holguín submitted her report to António Guterres as her tenure as an envoy came to an end. Her report focused on the prospect of a resumption of negotiations to solve the Cyprus problem and whether or not there is sufficient common ground between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot sides. Having taken receipt of the report, Guterres will now decide the next steps with regards to the Cyprus problem. Holguín also held meetings with Greece’s Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, on the sidelines of the NATO summit, which took place in Washington DC.

On July 11, the Chief of UNFICYP, Colin Steward, briefed behind closed doors the UN Security Council on the latest state of the Cyprus problem.

On July 11, former British minister Sir Iain Duncan Smith visited the north where he met with Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar. Smith, a current MP and member of the opposition Conservative party, called for direct flights from the United Kingdom to the north’s Ercan (Tymbou) Airport. According to Smith, the reason he visited Tatar was to start a campaign to ensure that Turkish Cypriot British citizens who have extended families in the north do not experience difficulties in their travels due to the lack of direct flights. He noted that the campaign in the UK’s parliament for direct flights to the north was “cross-party”, and that a letter had been sent to the country’s Foreign Secretary David Lammy. He added that there is “no valid reason” for the lack of direct flights between the UK and the north.

On July 18, the Turkish parliament passed a resolution supporting a two-state solution to the Cyprus

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problem. The resolution stated that the “only and definitive solution on the island” can be achieved by “granting the Turkish Cypriot people their inherent rights” and by “codifying their sovereign equality and equal international status”. The resolution, which was hailed by Ersin Tatar, stressed that it is essential that any attempts to resolve the Cyprus problem are built on this reality.

July 20 marked the 50th anniversary of the 1974 Turkish invasion, which resulted in the occupation of the island’s northern third, following a military coup engineered by the Greek military junta that toppled the government of the Republic on July 15. Events and memorials were held in the south while in the north a military parade took place in the presence of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in celebration of what is officially considered by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side as a peace operation. During his visit to the north, Erdoğan reiterated that the only way forward is a two-state solution.

During a foreign policy debate at the House of Commons on July 30, the new Labour Party government reaffirmed the UK’s support for a bizonal, bicomunal federation settlement of the Cyprus problem.

HYDROCARBONS

On July 4, Italy’s Eni denied that it had been engaged in any discussion for the sale of shares in Cyprus, after Bloomberg reported that the firm was considering divestment from specific projects, including Indonesia and Cyprus.

On July 18, the Chinese-led construction firm CPP-Metron Consortium Ltd (CMC) announced it was terminating the agreement over the Vasiliko LNG terminal. In a statement, the firm accused Natural Gas Infrastructure Company (Etyfa) of bullying and leaving CMC to work “without proper or timely payments” for years. In the termination letter, CMC

said Etyfa and its advisers on the project had little to no relevant experience in any of the essential components for delivering a project of this nature: oil and gas, EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) works, and conversion of an LNG carrier to an FSRU (floating storage regasification unit). The government will invite two tenders in a bid to complete the LNG project, one for the remaining construction work on the jetty at the land-based facilities at Vasiliko and the other for acquiring a floating regasification unit.

On July 25, the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO) announced that it opened an investigation into Cyprus’ contentious Vasiliko liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal on suspicion of procurement fraud, misappropriation of EU funds and corruption. In a statement, EPPO said the investigation was prompted by an Audit Office report on the matter “regarding possible violations during the procurement procedure and the subsequent execution of the public contract for the LNG project”. The project aims to create an entry point for natural gas to Cyprus, enabling the country to connect with the wider European gas market, and involves a cost of €542m, of which approximately €101m was financed by the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) programme. The construction, which should have been concluded in December 2019, has not yet been completed. In a 136-page report on the Vasiliko LNG, the Audit Office said the management of the whole project has been tragic. It identified irregularities over invoices which had been approved as well as over approvals Etyfa gave for subcontractors. The European Commission has demanded that Cyprus repay almost €69m, which had been paid in grants. The House Energy Committee convened an extraordinary meeting on July 30 to discuss the latest developments on the project.





GREEK CYPRIOTS

Gender Developments

On July 1, the Commissioner for Gender Equality, Josie Christodoulou, spoke at the Women in Tech Cyprus Meetup, where she emphasised the importance of encouraging young women to pursue careers in STEM fields (Science Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) by offering them appropriate guidance and support. The Commissioner reiterated the need to close the gender gap in these sectors. Additionally, she addressed the issue of women's underrepresentation in the labour market overall, and particularly in STEM professions.

Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

On July 30, the Head of Cyprus' Energy Regulatory Authority (Cera), Andreas Poulikkas said it is under pressure to consent to Cypriot consumers paying a fee for the Great Sea Interconnector, the subsea electricity cable linking the island to Greece. Reportedly, Greece's Independent Power Transmission Operator (Admie) has threatened to stop the project unless Cypriots start contributing by January 2025, like consumers in Greece will. Cera had rejected the idea of imposing a €0.6 cents levy on consumers per kilowatt hour starting January 2025. Under an agreement between the two countries' energy regulators, Cyprus will bear 63% of the cost of the proposed €1.9bn project. On July 4, Energy Minister George Papanastasiou stated that the government is concerned that the European Commission may withdraw its €657m subsidy for the project. Cera would take a definitive decision on the matter by the end of August 2024.

On July 22, the EAC stated that it is moving forward with securing large plots of state land for building more photovoltaic (PV) parks and with securing two updated generators for the Dhekelia power station, as well as storage systems. The authority is also set

to finally move ahead with the installation of smart meters. The meters are expected to benefit consumers by enabling them to monitor and adjust their energy usage.

Domestic Developments

According to the Cyprus Statistical Service (Cystat) tourist arrivals in Cyprus displayed a slight yet steady increase in June 2024, recording a 5.5% rise to 482,261 compared to 456,985 in 2023. This upward trend is also reflected in the first half of the year, with arrivals from January to June 2024 showing a 2.4% cent increase, reaching 1,652,475, up from 1,613,690 during the same period in 2023. The United Kingdom continues to be the primary source of tourists, contributing 35.6% of the total arrivals in June 2024, which equates to 171,704 visitors. Other significant contributors include Israel, accounting for 10.7% (51,814 tourists), Poland with 7.5% (36,202 tourists), Sweden with 4.9% (23,639 tourists), and Germany at 4.5% (21,552 tourists).

On July 29, Deputy spokesman Yiannis Antoniou stated that the government is ready to help with a possible impending evacuation of Lebanon. According to Antoniou the country's facilities are on stand-by in accordance with the Estia plan, Cyprus' existing plan to deal with mass evacuation events of European Union and third country nationals from neighbouring countries. Word of a potential evacuation came after Israel retaliated by killing high ranking Hezbollah and Hamas leaders, following the deaths of 12 people in a strike attributed to Hezbollah in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

According to a survey conducted by consultancy group Cypronetwork, a total of 43% of Cypriots believe the rise of Elam is dangerous for democracy while 40% said Elam's rise is not dangerous for democracy. Meanwhile, 63% of respondents viewed the recent election of social media influencer Fidi-as Panayiotou as an MEP as positive and 58% said

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there was a need for new parties. The survey, was conducted among 1,000 respondents between July 2 and July 29.

Foreign Relations

There was nothing to report.

Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

On July 1, the Minister of Transport, Communications and Works announced that the agreement to transfer employment of workers from Kition Ocean Holding, which managed the port of Larnaca, to the Development Company of Larnaca and Famagusta has been finalised. According to the Minister, this agreement would remain in place until the future of the port is clarified.

On July 3, the cabinet approved three bills aimed at combating undeclared work. According to the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, these are part of the government's strategy to better regulate the labour market by addressing irregular, undeclared employment more effectively. More specifically, the first bill, which amends the Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Law, aims to improve access to information about employment terms and conditions and to enhance the enforcement of this law from 2023. The second bill amends the Social Insurance Law, to impose an extrajudicial fine on an employer in case of undeclared work and the third bill amends the On Extrajudicial Offenses Regulation Law, to align with the Social Insurance Law, enabling the issuance of fines when inspectors discover undeclared work.

On July 4, the government's hourly paid workers announced that they are ready to go on strike due to significant concerns about the renewal of the collective agreement, which is currently under discussion in the Joint Labour Committee at the Ministry of Finance. They noted that since 2009, there has

been no general pay increase. In contrast, there was a reduction in the starting scales by 10%, a freeze on increments for five years, wage cuts, reductions in shifts and other allowances, as well as a decrease in compensation for overtime work. Trade union representatives recommended patience in view of the ongoing social dialogue.

On the same day, following many months of negotiations, a collective agreement was signed for the first time for nearly 3,000 workers in the distribution and courier industry at the Department of Labour Relations of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. The social dialogue started after WOLT delivery drivers staged a 10-day strike in 2022, due to the very exploitative terms of employment. Notably, the trade unions' representatives stated, "This is the first collective agreement for workers in this sector." However, the only platform involved was WOLT, as other companies refused to engage. The agreement stipulates several key provisions: it regulates salaries and allowances, sets a 40-hour workweek over six days and incorporates cost-of-living allowance (COLA). Additionally, employers are required to provide workers with equipment such as helmets, jackets, transport boxes, and box mounting bases, and it also regulates the use of their motor vehicles.

On July 5, trade unions strongly criticised the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) preliminary study aimed at rationalising the state payroll, which was published on June 29. Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) and Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK) declared that they will not accept any salary reductions and, in particular, they will not allow, any distortions in the payment of COLA. Highlighting the IMF's observation concerning the wage gap between the public and private sectors, the two trade unions reiterated their long-standing demand for policies aimed at strengthening wages in the private sector.





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Additionally on July 5, Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (RIK or CyBC) workers announced plans to strike on Friday, July 12, to demand payment of pension benefits to those who retired under the new pension plan. However, the strike was cancelled because the Minister of Finance, the Board of Directors at CyBC and the trade unions agreed on a road map to address the issue of delayed pension payments to retired permanent employees of the organisation.

On July 11, the Civil Aviation Department Employees Branch of the Pancyprian Public Servants trade union (PASYDY) warned of escalating their actions following the spontaneous two-hour work stoppage over staffing shortages, which took place at Larnaca and Paphos airports on Tuesday, July 9. Trade unions expressed concern that no responsible parties showed any interest in convening a meeting or communicating after the work stoppage, which they found alarming. PASYDY alleged that the Department of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Transport had broken their earlier commitments to restore the double-staffing positions and called for “immediate and decisive intervention”.

On July 12, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance presented to social partners the revised proposal for the actuarial reduction of 12% in case of early retirement. According to the Minister, the proposed regulation applies to workers who had since retired after contributing to the Social Insurance Fund for 40 years and almost five months. Trade unions had expressed concerns and reservations about the proposal. The general secretary SEK, Andreas Matsas, indicated that the proposal excludes the majority of pensioners and called for a continuation of the dialogue and consideration of alternative suggestions. Similarly, on behalf of PEO, Sotiroula Charalambous stated that the union’s suggestions were neither considered nor evaluated.

On July 18, a framework agreement was signed between the Minister of Finance and the PEO and SEK that foresees salary increases of 1.5% in the public and broader public sector from October 2024. Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KEBE) noted that this increase follows the recent salary increases through COLA, and they warned that the continuous increases could make state salaries unsustainable. The Director of the Federation of Employers and Industrialists (OEB), Michalis Antoniou, commented in the same spirit.

On July 22, workers at Caramondani Bros Limited announced a 24-hour strike, demanding a collective agreement and wage increases. However, the strike was suspended when the company committed to submitting a new collective agreement proposal to the board.

On July 25, OEB proceeded to inform its members about the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA), which had entered into force on June 29. NZIA is a central pillar of the Green Deal Industrial Plan, which aims to scale up the manufacturing of net-zero technologies in the European Union and to create the conditions that favour investments in green technologies.

On July 29, an agreement was signed to renew the collective agreement in the construction industry after trade unions PEO, SEK, and Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (DEOK), along with the Federation of Associations of Building Contractors (OSEOK), accepted a mediation proposal from Minister of Labour. Pending since 2022, this agreement will extend until the end of 2027 and impact tens of thousands of workers.

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TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Gender Developments

No notable developments occurred during the month of July.

Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 72.5% higher in July 2024 compared to July 2023. Consumer prices had risen by 3.5% in July alone; the inflation rate in the first seven months of 2024 has reached 37.7%. The monthly food inflation was 3.4%. The highest monthly inflation was in the “communication” segment where an increase of 15% was recorded; the second highest was “miscellaneous goods and services” segment with 7.1%.

Passenger numbers at Ercan (Tymbou) Airport significantly increased in the first six months of 2024 compared to the same period last year. In total, 2.18 million passengers passed through the airport during the first six months of the year, compared to 1.7 million during the first six months of 2023 – an increase of 28%. This has been aided by the new terminal, which was opened in July last year. The new runway’s length allows for larger aircraft to take off from and land at the airport, thus increasing the number of passengers passing through.

Relations with Turkey

On July 27, the Turkish Foreign Ministry removed its Ambassador in Nicosia, Metin Feyzioğlu, replacing him with Deputy Foreign Minister Yasin Ekrem Serim. Serim obtained his Bachelor’s degree at the Girne American University in Kyrenia, and reportedly he and his family have business dealings in north Cyprus. The exact reason behind Feyzioğlu’s removal is unclear; he has been appointed as Turkey’s Ambassador to Czechia, and no official reason has been given by the Turkish government for the change.

Domestic Developments

The senior partner of the ruling coalition government, UBP (National Unity Party) will hold its ordinary congress on September 21 amidst a new round of controversy. Two prospective candidates reportedly were summoned to the Turkish ambassador’s summer residence (Villa Firtina) in Çatalköy (Ayios Epiktitos) and told not to run. As a result, Economy Minister Olgun Amcaoğlu and former Minister of Interior and Kyrenia MP Kutlu Evren have not submitted their candidacies. Hasan Taçoy, a Nicosia MP and a long-time hopeful to become the party leader, promised to “dispel the black clouds” in the UBP when he formally submitted his candidacy on July 29. Taçoy told local daily Yenidüzen that there was no “real high-level intervention on the part of the Turkish authorities” but that “there was a suggestion from somewhere”. He went on to say that it was the current leader, Ünal Üstel (who had been elected unopposed after becoming the Prime Minister), who had requested that Turkey intervene in the election.

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 July 2024, 82.5% 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, the Cyprus problem, and incompetent political leaders, respectively. Also, 53.6% think that their economic situation will be worse in two years, while 30.3% think that it will remain the same. Moreover, 70.8% of those who participated in the survey think that the country’s economy will get worse in the next two years, while 16.3% think that it will remain the same; only 12.9% think that the TRNC economy will improve. According to the report, in June 2024, the happiness score of the community dropped slightly to 5.81 (out of 10), compared to the score of March 2024, which was 5.94. 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 2.97; the liveability score was 5.22 out of 10. The poll also showed that the least trusted institutions (on a scale of 5) are the government (2.27), the president (2.29), and trade unions (2.45), while the judiciary and the police are the most trusted ones with 3.43 and 3.35, respectively.

Besides its standard survey, which is repeated every three months, the CMIRS June 2024 survey also focused on two specific areas: (1) the healthcare system, and (2) the 2025 presidential election. According to the survey, the most satisfactory aspects of the healthcare system are doctors, ambulance services, and laboratory tests. However, even among these, only three out of ten people expressed satisfaction. Overall satisfaction with general health services is notably low, with only around one in ten participants reporting positive experiences. The survey results indicate that the least satisfactory aspects of the healthcare system included the physical conditions of hospitals, general medical services, and inpatient services. Reportedly, these areas received the most criticism from respondents, pointing to urgent needs for improvements in infrastructure and service quality. The survey also showed that the main opposition party CTP (Republican Turkish Party) leader Tufan Erhurman leads the poll asking Turkish Cypriots who they will vote for in next year's (October 2025) presidential election with 35.5%. The incumbent Ersin Tatar was in second place with 29.2%. Nicosia Mayor Mehmet Harmancı is in a distant third place with 7.7%, slightly ahead of former Minister of Foreign Affairs (and former Chief Negotiator) Kudret Özersay, who received 7.5% of respondents' support. Serdar Denктаş, the son of late Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denктаş, is in fifth place, with 5% of respondents having said they would vote for him.

Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

The Cyprus Turkish Public Officials Union (KTAMS) announced the hunger threshold, which is the monthly food expenditure required for a family of four to eat healthily, as 25,770 TL (€720) while the net minimum wage is 29,516 TL (€824). According to the statement, this figure was calculated based on the average price sent to the union by the Statistical Institute.

In a move aimed at addressing the challenges posed by the growing number of foreign students in primary and secondary education, the Minister of Education, Nazim Çavuşoğlu announced that, starting from the first grade, foreign students without Turkish proficiency certification will not be admitted to schools, even if they were born in the TRNC and are completely fluent in Turkish. The Primary School Teachers Trade Union (KTOS) Secretary General Burak Maviş was less than impressed by the announcement, telling the Cyprus Mail that, at present, only paid Turkish language courses are offered in the north, meaning that parents of children who do not speak Turkish would be forced to pay for their children to get an education. This, he said, violates Article 59 of the constitution, which states that "every child, regardless of gender, has the right to compulsory education until the age of 15 and free education until the age of 18". School children who do not speak Turkish has been a growing issue in recent years.





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.

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