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## 1. Cyprus Problem

In July, the Conference on Cyprus was held in Crans-Montana Switzerland. Unfortunately, the conference ended unsuccessfully. The talks ended after 10 days of negotiations on July 7, with UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres wishing the best to all Cypriots in the north and south of the island. The Conference on Cyprus had reconvened on June 28, in order to bridge the remaining gaps on the internal but mostly the external aspects of the Cyprus problem.

Two narratives were given for the collapse of the Crans-Montana talks, one in the south of the island and one in the north. The Greek Cypriot media cited Turkish intransigence on the issue of Turkish guarantees and intervention rights and Turkish Cypriot media cited President Nicos Anastasiades' insistence on 'zero troops and zero guarantees' as the reason for the failure of the talks

The sides had spent much of the first five days of the month accusing each other of operating outside the framework for discussion laid down by Guterres on June 30. The Guterres framework defined the abolition of guarantees and intervention rights of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom as one of the elements of an agreed solution and stipulated that the troops issue could fall back to the Treaty of Alliance levels stemming from the time of independence, which provides for a level of troops from Greece and Turkey that would be acceptable – at 950 and 650 soldiers, respectively. Turkey

kept insisting that while Ankara was willing to discuss the guarantee system, there would be a permanent presence of troops in Cyprus post-solution. On the other hand, the Greek Cypriot side was insisting that its position of zero guarantees and zero troops was also within the framework. Ahead of impasse the UNSG announced his arrival for July 6, while Anastasiades submitted on July 5, what he described as a package of proposals in order to compromise and break the deadlock.

The proposal included concessions on key Turkish Cypriot demands, a joint ticket for Greek and Turkish Cypriot presidential candidates combined with rotating presidency, effective deadlock-breaking mechanisms for decision-making bodies where at least one Turkish Cypriot vote would be required for approval, regardless of absolute majorities. These concessions were conditional on Turkey agreeing to a sunset-clause (final date) for the complete withdrawal of its troops and waiving its unilateral intervention rights. In exchange for his compromise on governance and troops, Anastasiades also demanded that Morphou and other territories be returned under Greek Cypriot administration, so that the number of refugees returning under Greek Cypriot administration reached 100,000. According to Politis newspaper, Anastasiades' proposal, provided for flexibility as to the sunset clause as long as Turkey agreed to no contingents but rather the participation of Greek and Turkish nationals, in reduced numbers, in an international police force. The proposal reportedly accepted the

equal treatment of Turkish citizens at a ratio of 4:1 in favour of Greek nationals based on overall population numbers.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu reportedly counter-proposed that instead of setting a final date for withdrawal, that the issue should instead be revisited in 15 years. According to Politis Cavusoglu reportedly said that if the Greek Cypriot side “behaved” during this period, Turkey would consider reviewing the issue earlier. As to the territory issue, Turkey reportedly accepted to return only part of Morphou, while it demanded that the provisions of a deal would be made EU primary law and equal treatment of all Turkish nationals in Cyprus.

According to reports, on the final night of the talks Cavusoglu signaled orally that Turkey would be prepared to accept an end to guarantees and rights of intervention. Reportedly, Turkey had also consented to a clause in Guterres’ framework, which stipulated a fall-back to the 1960 Treaty of Alliance figures for Greek and Turkish troops on the island – 950 and 650 respectively – with final decisions on whether these were to withdraw altogether, and when, to be made “at a higher level”, meaning the prime ministers of the three guarantor powers Greece, United Kingdom and Turkey. However, Cavusoglu reverted to Turkey’s publicly stated positions after Anastasiades demanded that he commit to the offered concessions formally in writing. The sunset ver-

sus review clause became in the end an insurmountable point between the two sides leading the Conference to a failure.

Soon after the Conference ended Cavusoglu stated that the failure of the Crans-Montans talks showed the impossibility of reaching a settlement within the parameters of the UN’s Good Offices Mission and there was “No use in insisting on them... “We will continue efforts for a settlement within different parameters,” Cavusoglu stated while making reference to a Plan B.

On the other hand, Anastasiades stated that he is ready to negotiate a solution within the parameters set by the UN Secretary-General. According to Anastasiades, the Greek Cypriot side would agree to negotiate if the Treaty of Guarantee and the Treaty of Alliance were terminated from the first day, along with the right of intervention, if an effective mechanism was found for implementing and monitoring the solution based on the comprehensive proposal that the Greek Cypriot side had tabled, and if a timetable for full withdrawal of Turkish troops is agreed.

On July 26, Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci in coordination with the Turkish army and the Turkish embassy in the north announced their decision to allow access to 4,000 Maronites to return to Maronite villages for resettlement, where Maronites and Turkish Cypriots used to live together before 1974. The three villages are Ayia Marina, Asomatos and

Karpasha. which until now, are controlled by the Turkish army. Maronites, along with Armenians and Latins (Catholics) are considered religious groups and part of the Greek Cypriot community. According to reports, the authorities in the north would also allow the return of 16,000 refugees to the fenced-off city of Varosha in Famagusta, which would remain under Turkish Cypriot administration. Commenting on the development, Government Spokesman Nicos Christodoulides stated that this was one of the new unilateral steps Turkish Cypriots have begun, following the collapse of the talks in Switzerland and in line with Turkey's policy of seeking a solution outside the parameters of the UN as part of Turkey's Plan B.

Following a briefing by UN Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide and UN Special Representative Elisabeth Spehar on the latest development on the negotiations, the President of the UN Security Council, China's Liu Jieyi said on July 20, that the members of the Security Council reaffirmed their continued commitment to support the two sides in their efforts to reach a comprehensive and durable Cyprus settlement based on relevant Security Council resolutions and urged for a period of reflection between the sides. During the briefing Eide put the talks' collapse down to a "collective failure" to stitch together a deal.

In a Cyprus New Agency interview dated July 22, Eide hit back at criticism from the Greek Cypriot side made in the wake of Crans-Montana, that

he was unprepared. Moreover, Eide stated that the UN's firm conviction in Crans-Montana was, and remained, that an end of the guarantee system would be possible. In particular Eide stated: "What we were not yet able to say was that we had the final answer to the longevity of the troop presence. It was clear the troops would be reduced and it was also clear that when they were reduced it would be down to the old levels. However, between the "sunset clause" review and perpetuity, we didn't reach a final agreement yet. So, we were moving towards a major breakthrough on guarantees, but we still had the outstanding issues on the troops. Let me be clear: There was agreement about the fact that their number after reduction would be very low, but the time they would stay wasn't yet agreed."

The interview was not well received by the Greek Cypriot side as Eide repeated his view that the talks collapsed because of a "collective failure." The Greek Cypriot position was that the Turkish side was 100% to blame for the collapse. Anastasiades launched a fiery assault against the UN special adviser, accusing him of lying about the failure of the talks in Crans-Montana and announced the publication of their minutes "to reveal who is telling the truth." Eide was also accused by the Turkish Cypriot foreign minister Tahsin Ertugruloglu for overstepping his authority when he stated in the same interview "that guarantees and intervention rights have no place in a modern state."

On July 24, Eide met separately with both leaders Mustafa Akinci and Nicos Anastasiades and concluded that he did not see a resumption of the talks any time soon.

Meanwhile, on July 25, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Minister of European Union affairs Omer Celik accused the Greek Cypriots of unilaterally blocking the opening of new chapters in the EU accession negotiations with Turkey and of adopting an unproductive stance at the Conference on Cyprus in Switzerland. According to the Cyprus News Agency, Celik and Cavusoglu, who were in Brussels for high-level talks with EU Foreign Affairs commissioner Federica Mogherini and enlargement chief Johannes Hahn, blamed the Greek Cypriots and called on reporters to ask the Italian commissioner “who was productive and who was unproductive at Crans-Montana”. Cavusoglu said the Greek Cypriot side had been “unproductive” and that it can no longer hold Turkey’s accession talks “hostage”.

On July 27, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution, renewing the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for six more months, until January 31, 2018 and called for a review in four months. It also called upon the two leaders to put their efforts behind further work on reaching convergences on the core issues, to improve the public atmosphere for negotiation to secure a settlement, and increase the participation of civil society in the process as appropriate.

July 20, marked the 43rd 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 legal government of the Republic. A series of memorial services and other events were held in the south. In the north, events were held to commemorate the 43rd anniversary of what Turkey calls the Cyprus Peace Operation. Meanwhile, activists belonging to the Solidarity reunification group in the north were removed by security after they unfurled a banner against the celebration of the Turkish invasion during a reception organized by Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci.

## 2. Hydrocarbons

On July 12, amidst repeated warnings issued by Turkish officials the *West Capella* drillship contracted by France’s TOTAL and Italy’s ENI arrived at Block 11 of Cyprus’ Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to commence exploratory drilling at the Onisiphoros West-1 well. The drilling site is approximately 40km from the Zohr gas field in Egyptian economic waters, where a 30-trillion-cubic-foot reservoir was discovered in 2015. The rights on Block 11 were assigned by the Republic of Cyprus to TOTAL back in 2013 at the conclusion of the second international bidding round. TOTAL decided to extend the lease of Block 11, re-evaluating its geophysical model in view of the discovery of

Egypt's Zohr field. Drilling is expected to last around two to three months and preliminary results are expected to be announced in September and October.

As a reaction, Turkey announced naval exercises in an area west of Cyprus covering parts of offshore blocks 5, 6, and 7. The *West Capella* was intercepted by a Turkish frigate somewhere between Crete and Cyprus, but it was allowed to go through without any obstructions. Ankara also sent two ships and a submarine to closely monitor the drilling activities. Meantime, the Turkish vessel *Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa* began seismic surveys in offshore block 6, which, Turkey claims, partially falls within its own continental shelf where ENI and TOTAL aim to commence exploratory drilling in 2018. Moreover, according to reports Ankara is actively seeking to acquire a drilling platform to commence exploratory drillings in Cypriot waters.

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim called on the Greek Cypriots to refrain from taking unilateral measures and warned that their moves to explore energy in the Eastern Mediterranean were "untimely and dangerous", adding that Ankara would continue to protect the rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriots. Speaking at an energy conference in Istanbul, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stressed that "it is impossible to appreciate that some energy companies are acting with, and becoming part of some irresponsible measures taken by Greek Cypriots". Turkey lays claims on blocks 1, 4, 6 and 7 of the Cypriot EEZ. Ankara also supports

the TRNC<sup>1</sup> claims on blocks 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 12 and 13 and does not recognize the Republic of Cyprus.

Nicosia's response has been measured as officials stressed the need for a low-key approach, thus diffusing tensions. Asked about the Republic of Cyprus' energy plans, bearing in mind the Turkish incursions in the island's EEZ, energy minister Giorgos Lakkotrypīs said that the drilling schedule continues as planned and hoped for a positive result. TOTAL who leased the *West Capella*, has repeatedly indicated that it will not interrupt operations unless the crew is physically endangered.

Meanwhile, according to the Times of Israel, Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz stated that Israel and Turkey have decided to accelerate efforts to conclude a deal by the end of this year that will enable construction of a pipeline from Israel to Turkey.

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<sup>1</sup> The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is only recognised by the Republic of Turkey. While for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, Mustafa Akinci 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).

### 3. Greek Cypriots

#### Economic Developments

On July 19, Cyprus repaid part of its bailout loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before the payment was due. According to data released by the public debt management office the government paid €288million, cutting its debt to the IMF down to €700m. The early repayment took place following the issuance of a seven-year 2.75% benchmark of €850 million last June, in a bid to reduce debt servicing costs. The interest rate on the IMF loan was 3.52%. The remaining cash received from the bond was used to roll over more expensive bonds of a nominal value of €500million. Both the IMF executive board and the European Stability Mechanism board of directors approved the early repayment.

According to the Statistical Service the number of tourist arrivals in June rose by 14 % to 472,450, the highest ever recorded in June, compared to the respective month of 2016, among saturation signs from the UK and Russia, the two major sources of incoming tourism.

On July 28, Moody's Investors Service upgraded Cyprus's credit rating a notch from B1 to Ba3 which is still three grades into the speculative area, citing the economy's resilience and a fiscal over performance. Moody's, which kept the outlook at positive, explained that it reflects "improvements in economic resilience and

continuing fiscal outperformance are likely to be sustained, with a reduction in the debt-to-GDP ratio as well as a fall in the stock of non-performing loans held by the banks".

#### Domestic Developments

AKEL central committee announced on July 22, that it had authorized its general secretariat to proceed with their decision to "explore the possibilities" of cooperating with Stavros Malas in the February 2018 presidential elections, after a cooperation with businessman Mike Spanos, the party's first choice, fell through in June. If Malas and AKEL's leadership agree on important issues such as the Cyprus problem and the economy, the former's candidacy would be ratified at a party conference set to be held in September. Malas, served as health minister during Demetris Christofias' administration and was AKEL's candidate in the 2013 presidential elections where he made it to the second round but lost to DISY's Nicos Anastasiades.

#### Labour Relations and Trade Unions

A 24-hour strike took place in the Cooperative Bank network on July 11. This was a continuation of the three-hour strike that took place in late June as there was no development in the attempt for resolution of the dispute.

The Auditor General has stated his disagreement with the Ministry of Education's demand for the opening of 358 teaching posts. He claims in his letter to parliament that the Ministry of

Education has not rationalized working time in practice and has not explained why the teaching time decreases with increasing years of service and what extra duties the teachers assume because of this decrease. The General Auditor also claims that teachers in Cyprus work less than their colleagues in other EU countries and have fewer students per class when compared with other countries which perform better in international assessments.

PEO has accepted the proposal of the Minister of Labour for the COLA which stipulates the restarting of the mechanism using 2017 as a base year, paying COLA once a year at 50% for a transitional period of three years and freezing it again in cases when the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> term of the preceding year manifest negative growth rates. This compromise agreement was deemed satisfactory as unions were able to block the employers' demand for the abolition of COLA or continuing it from the point at which it was frozen and therefore applying it negatively as a result of the deflation of the crisis years. The response of the rest of the social partners is still pending; if it is positive the new arrangement will begin in January 2018.

Parliament approved the principle of rotation in the public and semi-public sector while it lifted the freeze for 125 positions in the public and 83 in the semi-public sector.

A protest was held by PEO's union at CYBC against the management's decision to promote several employees instead of entering into dia-

logue with the unions with respect to the many existing diachronic problems of the institution.

The conflict between ETYK and Hellenic Bank has not been resolved and ETYK warns that if the bank's management "continues with its authoritarian stance" it will "take further measures". ETYK noted that participation in its 24-hour strike in the previous month was universal and that even OEB has agreed with its position. The new company established by Hellenic Bank, APS, is already operating and ETYK considers this a unilateral measure placing the rights of the 130 employees transferred to APS at risk. The management of Hellenic Bank insists that there is no change in terms of labour rights and benefits. ETYK also considers the non-provision of the yearly raise to be a violation of the law concerning the protection of wages. The Ministry of Labour undertook to mediate between the two parties. A 48-hour strike of the 130 employees transferred to APS also took place.

The European Parliament adopted the Report on precarious employment suggested by the Euro MP of the Left GUE/NGL Neoklis Sylikiotis, calling on the European Commission and the member states to ensure effective protection of workers, to limit and finally abolish precarious employment. This Report comes in the series of reports on social dumping and the precarious employment of women and aims to introduce in the political debate the ILO definition of decent employment.



Paid paternity leave has been instituted in the Republic of Cyprus. As of August 1, 2017, fathers of newborn children are entitled to two weeks leave paid by the Social Insurance system. This new right is expected to be used by many unlike the right to unpaid parental leave that was instituted in 2003 and stipulates for up to 18 weeks per child below the age of eight.

## 4. Turkish Cypriots

### **Economic Developments**

According to the State Planning Organization, in June, the consumer price index rose by 7.68% compared to December 2016 and 15.02% compared to June 2016. Thus, the total inflation rate for the first six months of 2017 has reached 7.68%. Separately, the State Planning Organization announced that the real GDP grew by 3.6% in 2016. Due to the devaluation of the TL against the US dollar, the GDP in US dollar terms increased only by 2.5% from USD 3,74 bn. in 2015, to 3,84 bn. In 2016, per capita income increased by 1.3% in 2016 reaching USD 13,902 dollars.

The minimum wage has been raised to 2,175 TL (€525). The decision was taken with a majority vote after workers' and state representatives agreed on a proposal to reflect onto salaries the 7.68% rise in the cost of living, though employer representatives had objected.

According to a report by daily Havadis, the implementation of the economic and financial protocol with Turkey has almost been suspended by the Turkish Cypriot government.

As a result, the government is having difficulty to make use of Turkish funds earmarked for 2017, as this is contingent on the implementation of the protocol, which envisages reforms that can undermine the coalition partners' electoral support. The newspaper also implied that the Turkish Cypriot government's failure to make the necessary reforms cost the former Turkish Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Cyprus affairs Tugrul Turkes his job as (see below).

### **Relations with Turkey**

The Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Recep Akdag has been appointed as the new Minister of State in Charge of Cyprus Affairs following a government reshuffle in Turkey. Akdag's predecessor Tugrul Turkes is no longer in the cabinet.

Talip Atalay, Turkish Cypriot Head of the Religious Affairs Department i.e. Mufti of Cyprus, was detained during a trip to Turkey as part of the probe into the FETO organization, which is considered by Turkish officials responsible for last summer's failed coup attempt. Atalay was released on bail after being questioned by police in Mersin. His lawyer dismissed as "groundless" all accusations against Atalay. According to Cyprus Today, Atalay's deputy,

Fahrettin Ogdu, claimed the arrest was due to accusations against him by the Turkish Cypriot Foreign Ministry and because of meetings he had with other religious leaders of the island as part of the inter-religious dialogue. He added that the allegations against Atalay were a smear campaign by "certain circles" aimed at discrediting him.

Turkish Ambassador Derya Kanbay stated that there was "evidence" that FETO elements had penetrated not only public institutions in northern part of Cyprus but healthcare, education, business community and civil society organizations as well. In a different context, Turkish deputy Prime Minister and government spokesman Numan Kurtuluş said "We are aware of the fact that the FETO organisation has reorganised in the TRNC but we will bring them out into the open".

To mark the first anniversary of the failed coup attempt in Turkey and to pay tribute to those who were killed, prayers of remembrance were said outside the Turkish embassy in Nicosia. Turkish President Erdogan's chief adviser Bulent Gedikli, ambassador Kanbay and TRNC Health Minister Faiz Sucuoglu were among those who attended the ceremony. Gedikli, who is also AKP's representative in north Cyprus, praised the TRNC for supporting the Turkish government on the night of the coup attempt, adding that he had brought "love and greetings" from Erdogan.

### **Domestic Developments**

According to the opinion poll conducted by Prologue Consulting and published by Turkish Cypriot daily Yeniduzen, 72.5% of the 600 participants laid the blame on Anastasiades for the overall collapse of the peace talks, while 87.9% said they believed his overall contribution at the conference was negative. The poll also showed that while 74.4% of Turkish Cypriots were disappointed by the outcome of the conference, the majority of participants (67.6%) thought that Akinci's contribution to the conference was positive. Asked what type of solution they would prefer to see after the collapse of the talks, 56.1% said that they would prefer a two-state solution. Only 4.9% said that they would support union with Turkey. The three most important problems facing the community, according to the respondents were corruption and impunity, economic situation, and high cost of living.

On July 4, trade unions, including two main teachers' unions and opposition political parties including Social Democratic Party (TDP), United Cyprus Party (BKP) and New Cyprus Party (YKP), and civil society organizations called on President Mustafa Akinci to refer the new powers proposed for the Religious Affairs Department to the Constitutional Court because they are "unconstitutional". The 13 organizations issued a joint statement claiming that the Religious Affairs (Amendment) Bill was "discriminatory" and "against secularism". The bill was approved by the Parliament in June but later returned to

the assembly by Akinci upon attorney general's opinion. The government says the reforms are necessary in order to regulate religious activities, while opponents say the proposed amendments were "contrary to the equality principle of the Constitution" and had been drafted in a way that "largely favoured Sunni Muslims". The statement said the bill was in breach of Article 8 of the TRNC's Constitution, which states that "no privileges shall be granted to any individual, family, group or class". Furthermore, the joint statement criticized the bill for extending the authority and number of personnel of the department.

The leader of the junior coalition partner Democratic Party (DP) and Deputy Prime Minister Serdar Denktas announced that his party withdrew its support from the Joint Declaration dated 11 February 2014, which had been agreed by leaders of the two communities. "The negotiations process which was carried out within the framework of the Joint Declaration is over for us" Denktas said. Asked to comment on claims that the TRNC could become the 82<sup>nd</sup> province of Turkey, Denktas said that it was out of the question for them to approve the dissolution of the TRNC. On a different occasion, the senior coalition partner UBP leader and Prime Minister Huseyin Ozgurgun stated that "There is no chance of becoming a minority or the 82<sup>nd</sup> province of Turkey. The TRNC is an independent state with its democratic structure and it shall continue to be so despite all the difficulties".

### **Labour Relations and Trade Unions**

Another construction worker lost his life in an accident in Kyrenia. The victim was not wearing a safety belt when he lost his balance and fell from the fifth floor of a construction site. It turned out that the Labour Department warned the construction company about safety shortcomings a month earlier. *Cyprus Today* reported that union leaders slammed the government for "failing to take action". Cyprus Turkish Public Servants' Union head Ahmet Kaptan accused the government of "standing by and watching while workers are dying". "In the last 10 years, government has failed to employ even a single inspector at the Labour Department," Kaptan said. "Due to the lack of measures and inspections, eight workers were killed at work last year, while 129 were injured". He added that "in light of recent fatal work accidents, this number is going to be much higher this year." Labour and Social Security Minister Hamza Saner chaired an emergency meeting with his officials following the accident to discuss what steps could be taken. Saner announced that "legal loopholes" would be closed with the impending introduction of new workplace health and safety regulations, which his officials have been working on since September.

The Ministry of Labour imposed a three-day ban on outdoor working between noon and 4pm, when temperature hit 44 degrees. Ministry teams carried out inspections at 231 workplaces across the country, mainly construction

sites, after some 102 complaints were lodged via the ministry's hotline, and warned 22 companies for not complying with the ban; yet did not impose any fine. According to the relevant law, employers are warned if they are caught breaking the ban for the first time. Those breaking the ban for a second time are fined up to half of the minimum wage. Speaking to *Cyprus Today* Hasan Felek, leader of the Dev-Is trade union called for existing legislation to be upgraded, saying: "Under the existing law those who do not abide by the ban can only be warned or fined an insignificant amount. What we need is an amendment which would introduce deterrent penalties. Otherwise employers will pay those insignificant fines and get away with breaking the law." Cafer Gurcafer, the chairman of Construction Contractors' Union agreed with Felek on the necessity of legal changes to protect the health and safety of workers adding that the authorities need to consider regulations restricting outdoor working hours in summer time to 5am-10am and 4pm-7pm similar to Dubai.

## 5. FES Cyprus Events

### August

--- no events ---

### September

**Monday, 11.09.2017, 7:30 pm**

Austrian Embassy Nicosia / Federal Chancellery of Austria / FES

Book presentation

**green line - evocative of an archeology of desperation and desire**

CVAR, 285 Ermou Street,  
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Open to the Public



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