

10th
anniversary

FRIEDRICH
EBERT 
STIFTUNG



FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Cyprus celebrates its 10th anniversary. To mark the occasion the FES newsletter has a new design and we hope you share our excitement over the new look. We hope that the pandemic will allow for an appropriate celebration later this year. In the meantime, we wish you good health and hope you enjoy our “new” newsletter.

Newsletter No.
112
SEPTEMBER 21

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



10th
anniversary

FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG



FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

CONTENT

EVENTS, PODCASTS, PUBLICATIONS 3

CYPRUS PROBLEM 4

HYDROCARBONS 6

GREEK CYPRIOTS 7

Economic Developments

Domestic Developments

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

TURKISH CYPRIOTS 9

Economic Developments

Relations with Turkey

Domestic Developments

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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

2





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

PODCASTS in OCTOBER:

Hrishabh Sandilya and Emmanuel Achiri

Migration 2.0 Podcast Episode 5 - International Students in the TRNC
(in English)

Hubert Faustmann, Hrishabh Sandilya and Andrew Connelly

Migration 2.0 Podcast Episode 6 - Afghanistan, Lebanon, EU Migration Policy and Cyprus
(In English)

Hrishabh Sandilya and Nicos Trimikliniotis

Migration 2.0 Podcast Episode 7 - Asylum and Migration in Cyprus in the Age of COVID-19
(in English)



PODCASTS in NOVEMBER:

No Podcasts in November

PUBLICATIONS in OCTOBER:

Thorsten Kruse

The Religious Heritage of Cyprus: A Survey in the City of Nicosia and its Suburbs
Report 2021



PUBLICATIONS in NOVEMBER:

Yiannos Katsourides and Leandros Savvides

ELAM's Political Evolution: Secular(ish) Pandemic Politics and Electoral Success
Report 2021

EVENTS in OCTOBER:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus and the Office of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process under the Auspices of the Embassy of Sweden

The Religious Heritage of Cyprus in the City of Nicosia and its Suburbs - Launch Event

Wednesday, 6th October 2021

6 PM - 8:30 PM (EEST)

Chateau Status



EVENTS in NOVEMBER:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus and Sophia Papastavrou

Book Launch & Discussion: Women, Peace and Security: The next Generation

Thursday, 11th November 2021

6 PM - 9 PM (EEST)

Home for Cooperation

INVITATION ONLY

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus and Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON)

EPON report on the UN peacekeeping and good offices missions in Cyprus - Launch Event (Online)

Wednesday, 20th October 2021

4:30 PM- 6 PM (EEST)

Zoom Registration required:

<https://bit.ly/30jKUy5>

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

CYPRUS PROBLEM

In September, the 76th UN General Assembly took place in New York. An informal trilateral meeting held on the sidelines of the Assembly between the UN Secretary General and the Cypriot leaders, confirmed the divergent positions of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leadership, rather than creating any expectations for the resumption negotiations. This culminated with the failure of the UNSG to appoint a much anticipated special envoy due to opposition met by the Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar.

On September 7, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen called on Turkey to “reverse the actions undertaken in Varosha” and reiterated the EU’s commitment to a bizonal, bicomunal federation. Von der Leyen’s statements came in response to Cypriot MEP Niyazi Kizilyurek’s letter on the involvement of the Turkish government in the affairs of the Turkish Cypriot community. Von der Leyen said that EU foreign ministers will consider actions at their next meeting should Turkey not reverse its actions.

On September 15, President Nicos Anastasiades met with UK High Commissioner, Stephen Lillie, where they exchanged views on the prospects of resuming negotiations on Cyprus. The British High Commissioner reaffirmed Britain’s position for the resumption of the peace talks based on the agreed framework, giving some explanations regarding the initiatives being developed by the British government. The British diplomat had earlier in the month suggested that efforts should focus on an agreement on a decentralised federation, which, as he pointed, was also an idea Anastasiades himself had pitched in the past. During an interview with daily Kathimerini, Lillie stated that the UK does not sup-

port a two-state solution, while the informal ideas discussed with the sides fall firmly within the agreed UN framework for a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality. Lillie’s statements disgruntled Greek Cypriot opposition but also the Turkish Cypriot¹ leadership, both accusing Britain of meddling in favour of the other side.

According to a public opinion poll commissioned by the Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar’s office, a two-state solution in Cyprus is the most popular solution model among Turkish Cypriots. The survey carried out by Red Border polling company with a group of 1,010 participants and announced ahead of Tatar’s New York visit, showed that 49.2% wanted to see a two-state settlement based on equal sovereignty, while 33.1% expressed support for a federal settlement and 11.3% supported annexation by Turkey.

On September 17, the Southern European countries group (EUMed) called on Turkey to accept Cyprus’ invitation to engage in dialogue on the delimitation of their maritime zones and reverse illegal actions in the fenced-off area of Varosha. In a declaration after the 8th EUMed Summit held in Athens, the heads of state and government of Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain stated that proposals for a two-state solution were “unacceptable”. In their references to Cyprus, they reiterated their strong commitment to a viable comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem based on a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant UNSC Resolutions, which, they said, “are binding on all, and in line with the EU acquis, values and principles.”

On September 18, the first bicomunal environmental clean-up within the walled city of Nicosia called “Let’s Do It” was organized with the support

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).





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

of Home for Cooperation, CyprusInno, Unite Cyprus and the NGO Together Cyprus. The event began in Phaneromeni Square in the south of Nicosia and Buyuk Han in north Nicosia and ended at a mutual point, the Home for Cooperation in the buffer zone. In his speech at the UN General Assembly on September 21, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke of “a realistic approach” to the Cyprus problem and stressed that sovereign equality and the equal international status of the Turkish Cypriots was an essential element for a solution. Erdogan noted that Turkey supported the Turkish Cypriots’ new vision for the solution of the Cyprus problem and called on the international community to assess these ideas “with an open mind and without prejudice”. Erdogan added that it was unfair that only one of the two leaders of “the two peoples” on the island was accepted as equal by the UN and was allowed to address the Assembly, while the other one could not make his voice heard on the same platform. Erdogan also called for dialogue and cooperation and said Ankara’s proposal for an Eastern Mediterranean summit was still on the table.

On 22 September, Anastasiades held a 20-minute meeting with the UNSG, Antonio Guterres. Commenting on the meeting, Anastasiades noted that new positions and ideas in relation to the Cyprus problem were raised and he listed some positions over how a dialogue could be reignited. Anastasiades was referring to alternative proposals he had suggested over time to overcome the stalemate such as the decentralisation of powers, parliamentary democracy, and confidence-building measures that would allow for a positive political climate leading to the creation of the necessary conditions for the resumption of talks. Anastasiades reportedly briefed Guterres on his suggestion for a return to the 1960 constitution under certain conditions, in order to ensure the continued existence of the state and its evolution which had been agreed upon in the High-Level Agreements as well as UN resolutions. Anastasiades had previously explained that this pro-

posal was not a call for a return to a unitary state, but rather a call to the Turkish Cypriot side to assume the positions it is entitled to, based on the 1960 constitution so that a dialogue can start on territorial adjustments and other issues. Tatar has already rejected this proposal.

On September 24, Anastasiades addressed the UN Assembly. The President stated that a lack of means for the implementation of UN resolutions and decisions have allowed Turkey the “audacity to pass off as a victim instead of the perpetrator”. Among other, he referred to Turkey’s efforts to change the status of Varosha, contrary to UN resolutions and condemnation by the international community. He questioned Erdogan’s understanding of international law and his call for good neighbourly relations and stressed that Turkey aims to turn Cyprus into its protectorate. He reiterated proposals such as the decentralisation of powers, a parliamentary system with a ceremonial head of state and rotating prime minister and repeated his invitation to Turkish Cypriots to rejoin the state institutions established by the 1960 constitution.

The Technical Committee on Health agreed to lift test requirements for fully vaccinated persons at the crossing points. As of September 27, those who have been fully vaccinated are able to cross without providing a PCR or rapid test.

On September 27, Tatar and Anastasiades held an informal meeting with Guterres, on the sidelines of the 76th UN General Assembly, in a bid to find common ground for the resumption of the peace talks. The informal meeting was held in the framework of a lunch where both leaders developed their respective divergent positions, but refrained from giving a detailed account to media. Tatar reportedly developed the Turkish Cypriot position for sovereign equality and two independent states, while Anastasiades developed his position which was reportedly in line with UN resolutions and a way to overcome the deadlock. Although no common ground was found, both sides reportedly agreed to strengthen

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

cooperation and bicomunal technical committees for the improvement of life on the island. The two leaders also consented to the appointment of a new special envoy replacing outgoing Jane Holl Lute, to discuss confidence building measures but also to explore the possibility of finding common ground between the two sides. Lute was appointed by Guterres as a UN special envoy on the Cyprus problem in 2018, but was terminated from her post after assuming a senior position at an international energy and petrochemical company, following concern about potential conflicts of interest between Cyprus and Turkey. The new envoy was expected to be announced after the meeting. Throughout the month, Tatar had been reiterating that he would not agree to the appointment by the Security Council of the separate position of a new special representative who would be following the framework of UN resolutions on the Cyprus problem and who will not be open to discuss a two-state solution.

On September 29, a delegation from the Social Democratic Party (TDP) visited AKEL. Speaking following the hour-long meeting, the leaders of the two parties reaffirmed their commitment to work for a federal settlement in Cyprus and called for the resumption of the negotiations from where they had left off in Crans Montana and in line with the UN Secretary-General Guterres' framework.

The Turkish government has donated US\$100,000 to the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP). The latest donation has brought Ankara's financial assistance to the CMP to \$1,5m over the past 15 years.

On September 30, Tatar briefed the leaders and representatives of political parties with seats in the parliament on his contacts in New York. The main opposition (Republican Turkish Party) CTP and TDP boycotted the meeting on the grounds that Tatar did not hold a meeting to inform and consult with the parliament before going to New York.

In contrast, to what was widely expected, no announcement was made by the UN by month's end,

leading to speculation that the appointment of a special envoy was blocked by the Turkish Cypriot leader. In his comments after the meeting Tatar stated that he insisted on the appointment of a "personal" representative who will not be bound by the UN Security Council.

Guterres was also expected to announce the name of a new special representative to Cyprus to replace outgoing Elizabeth Spehar, who left her post at the end of September. She has served as the head of the UN Mission in Cyprus for five years.

HYDROCARBONS

On September 4, during an Intergovernmental Summit between the Energy Ministers of Cyprus and Egypt, Natasa Pilides and Tarek El Molla decided to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the electricity interconnection between the two countries in the coming months. The ministers also called for expediting the deliberations of the joint committee which has been instructed to implement the intergovernmental agreement for the construction of a direct underwater pipeline to transfer natural gas from the offshore Aphrodite gas field in Cyprus to liquefaction plants (which convert gas into a liquid state) in Egypt. Within this framework, a meeting of the relevant technical committees convened in Cairo on September 15 and examined the various scenarios regarding the capacity, technical specifications, and economic aspects of the pipeline.

During a meeting with Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar, Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay stressed that if Greek Cypriots start drilling in the eastern Mediterranean Turkey will also do so. The statement came as a response to an announcement by the EXXON MOBIL/QATAR PETROLEUM consortium that it is set to begin work in late November to early December in Cyprus' offshore block 10.

On September 24, Anastasiades and Energy Minister Natasa Pilidou met in New York with EXXONMOBIL officials Michael Cousins, John Ardill

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

and Rochdi Younsi, where they discussed the next steps in the joint venture of EXXONMOBIL-QATAR PETROLEUM in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone ("EEZ"), which restarts at the end of the year with drilling in block 10. Pilidou also met on September 30 with Luca Bertelli, Deputy Chief Operating Officer of Natural Resources of Italy's ENI for a discussion on the company's activities in Cyprus' EEZ.

GREEK CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

On September 9, the European Commission announced the disbursement of €157m to Cyprus in pre-financing, as part of the funds and loans to be provided under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The Commission noted that the pre-financing is equivalent to 13% of the funds allocated to Cyprus. This pre-financing will help to kick-start the implementation of the crucial investment and reform measures outlined in Cyprus' recovery and resilience plan. Future disbursements will be based on the implementation of the investments and reforms outlined in Cyprus' national plan. Cyprus is set to receive €1.2bn in total, with €1bn provided in grants and €200m in loans.

AstroBank appointed two new board members on September 10. In an announcement released on September 16, the bank said that Michalis Sarris and Evi Rossidou have joined the board. Rossidou is AstroBank's Head of Corporate, SME and Shipping Division, having been with the bank since 2008, while Sarris is a well-known economist and former Finance Minister.

Deficit spending will be the norm for the next three years, according to finance minister Constantinos Petrides who presented to the council of ministers the state budget for 2022 as well as forecasts for the 2022-24 period. According to the finance ministry's forecasts, the budget deficit for 2022 will be €1.2bn, 5.1% of GDP, rising to €1.54bn in 2023 and €1.67bn

in 2024. Total state expenditure in 2022 will be the same as 2021 at €7.9bn, and more than one third will go on the public sector payroll, pensions and bonuses. Total expenditure in 2023 will rise to €8.29bn and in 2024 to €8.48bn. Spending on public sector wages and pensions will be up by 3.2%, compared to 2021, the ministry attributing this to the payment of the cost-of-living allowance (CoLA), wage increments and a rise in hirings. The remaining state expenditure will be €3bn on transfers, €2.5bn on loan repayments, €972m on operational expenses and €883m on other expenses. State revenue, for the three-year period, meanwhile was expected to record small increases, from €6.73bn next year to €6.8bn in 2024. The rate of growth in 2022 is forecasted to reach 4%.

The cabinet has appointed George Theocharides as the Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission's (CYSEC) new Chairman, promoting him from Vice Chairman, which he held since July last year. He replaces Demetra Kalogirou, who stepped down after 10 years as chairperson.

According to data from the Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission the total value of Assets under Management (AuM) of Collective Investments reached a record €10.7bn in the first half of 2021. This figure also represents a 9% increase quarter-on-quarter. Investment funds which invest partially or entirely in Cyprus, increased from 123 to 128 during the previous quarter, facilitating a total sum of €2.3bn being pumped into the Cypriot economy, representing 21.8% of the total value of AuM.

According to Eurostat, Cyprus has recorded the largest drop in unemployment of all European Union countries between July 2020 and July 2021, which now amounts to 5.2% of the economically active population compared with 7.9% in the corresponding period last year. Specifically, the reduction of the unemployed from 35,000 to 23,000 corresponds to a decrease of 34.3%, which is the largest drop at European level.

Fitch ratings agency has affirmed Cyprus' long-term

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

credit rating at BBB- with a stable outlook, reflecting the island's institutional strength and a record of robust economic growth and sound fiscal policy prior to the Covid-19 shock. The agency noted however, that these strengths are balanced by balance-sheet weaknesses, in particular high public debt, and a weak banking sector. Fitch said it expected a real GDP growth of 4.8% in 2021.

According to the Cyprus Statistical Service tourist arrivals in Cyprus reached 321,858 in August 2021, reflecting an increase of 208.7% compared to August 2020 during which 104,261 arrivals were recorded and a decrease of 41.9% compared to August 2019 with 553,845 arrivals being recorded at the time.

Data also showed that between January and August 2021, 960,150 tourists arrived in Cyprus, an increase of 535,300 over the respective period in 2020 (126%), but down by 64.9% compared to the same period of the year in 2019, when 2,735,839 arrivals were recorded.

Domestic Developments

In September the COVID19 cases increased from 113,588 cases to 120,272. The number of deaths attributed to the virus increased from 501 to 552. According to the health ministry more than 80.8% of the adult population has received at least the first dose while 77.4% have completed their vaccination. An epidemiological report by the health ministry showed that August was the deadliest month since the coronavirus pandemic outbreak in the island. The Delta variant of coronavirus remained dominant between late June and throughout the month of September.

On September 15, Turkish Cypriot MEP, Niyazi Kizilyurek, stated that he will table a discussion at the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education about the education ministry's handling of the English textbook with a reference to Kemal Ataturk and the call on teachers to tear that page out. The ministry withdrew the book after its pre-

vious instructions to "tear out" the 'offending' page sparked outrage when posted on Facebook by an English teacher. The page in question contained a reference to Ataturk, the first president of the Turkish Republic one century ago, in an exercise called "Turkey's greatest hero". The education ministry said that it was out of the question to have in the books used for education in the Republic's schools references that portray Kemal Ataturk as a model moral leader who "stood up for the people". It also said it recently replaced other English textbooks with references to "northern Cyprus" as if it were a second Cypriot state.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On September 29, the collective agreement in KEDIPES (Asset Management Company of Cyprus) was renewed. The previous version had expired on December 31, 2019. The renewal is accompanied by the simultaneous announcement of a voluntary exit plan. The duration of the collective agreement is 4 years and provides:

- Restoration of the salary cuts that had occurred to all the staff of the former SKT (Central Cooperative Bank) with retroactive effect from 2020.
- Harmonization of the employment conditions of the employees of the former Credit Cooperative Institutions with those of the former SKT.
- Increase of the employer's contribution to the provident fund from 7% to 9% for the specific employees.
- The contract also provides for an arrangement for complete cessation of employment relations between the employees of the former SKT who are currently employed in Altamira, with KEDIPES.

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

The state-owned company agreed to give Altamira employees three options:

- choose a specific date to return to KEDIPES,
- accept the voluntary exit plan,
- redeem their service in exchange for a proportionate amount of compensation.

The renewal of the collective agreement will also cover the staff transferred to Altamira. Altamira employs about 170 people who came from SKT and the total number of KEDIPES employees is 360.

On September 28, the Minister of Health met with representatives of the public doctors' unions, during which areas of joint action were discussed, in contrast to the unproductive dialogue that preceded with OKYPY (Health Services State Organization) on the same issues and which led to the decision of the trade unions on strike measures on 29 September. However, the Boards of Directors of both PASYKI (Pancyprian State Employed Doctors Union) and the Department of Doctors and Clinical Directors of PASYDY (Pancyprian Union of Government Employees) went on strike. The strike, according to the president of the Government Doctors Union, was patient-centered and aimed to highlight the suffering of patients with the operation of Public Hospitals. As mentioned, the main problems faced concern the following:

- There is a lack of suitable hospital beds in the pediatric ward, with the result that patients are forced to be transferred only to Markareio Pediatric hospital, which causes distress to both parents and children.
- There is a significant delay in surgeries due to the pandemic. According to Mr. Koumas, patients suffering from other issues should not be second to those with coronavirus. "There are other serious health problems," he said, adding that serious surgeries such as heart surgery are long overdue.

What the unions are really asking for is a parallel operation plan which, they claim, should have been done a long time ago and not two years after the outbreak of the pandemic. All this, as they stated, "constitutes disrespect to the patients and causes them suffering".

The dispute that has arisen between ETYK (Union of Bank Employees Cyprus) and Alpha Bank on the occasion of the Bank's decision to terminate the employment of 14 temporary employees, seems to be the beginning of a problem that will affect the banking sector in general. The union led the labor dispute in the employment department of the Ministry of Labor demanding the re-hiring of an employee, member of the Union, who has completed 12 months of continuous employment prior to her termination. The Ministry stated that Alpha Bank's decision to terminate her employment is a violation of the collective agreement of the two parties. The bank claims that the employment status of temporary employees was initiated in 2013, due to the banking crisis and ECB directions, following a relevant agreement with ETYK. These employees were hired on a completely separate contract on the basis of three-month contracts, which the Bank renewed according to its needs. According to a relevant law that is harmonized with EU, companies and organizations can employ an employee on an ad hoc basis for up to 30 months. Beyond this period, the employer has an obligation to make them permanent. When the process of recruitment of temporary staff by Alpha Bank had started, after the first quarter of 2013, ETYK found that other banks gradually began to extend the recruitment of temporary staff.

TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

According to figures revealed by the Statistics Institute at the beginning of the month, the GDP fell by 16.2% in 2020 to ₺21.4bn (€2.14bn); the GDP per

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

capita was calculated at US\$10,055. Later in the month, the Institute announced that in 2020, exports increased by 29% reaching US\$106.4m while imports decreased by 17.4% and fell to \$1.32bn. The figures also showed that the pandemic dealt a serious blow to the tourism and higher education sectors which are considered as the two driving forces behind the Turkish Cypriot economy. The tourism revenues dropped by 82.7% to US\$165.4m from US\$954.5m in 2019. The higher education sector suffered a 36.1% decline and revenues fell from US\$601.2m to US\$384m. These were partially offset by a 47.7% increase recorded in Turkish grants, which reached to \$150.5m, almost 50% higher than the 2019 figure.

According to the Tourism Planning Department figures, the hotel occupancy rate was 13.9% in June 2021; it was 4.7% in June 2020. The figure for July of this year was 26.1% while it was 11.2% in July 2020.

Relations with Turkey

On September 20, Prime Minister Ersan Saner met with the Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay in Ankara. Saner told the Anadolu Agency that his government keeps relations with Turkey at the highest level and it is satisfied with the economic ties and cooperation between the two countries. "It is our greatest desire to increase the volume of trade ... [and] make the TRNC one of the most important commercial centres in the world, similar to Dubai and Singapore". In a written statement issued on September 21, the Development and Economic Cooperation Office (KEI) which operates under the Turkish Embassy announced that 81.1m TL (€7.9m) has been channeled into the City Surveillance Management System, which became operational on September 7 (please see the domestic developments section).

Domestic Developments

In September, the number of Covid-19 cases increased from 16,421 to 19,544 while the number of deaths attributed to the virus increased from 62 to

78.

On September 7, city surveillance cameras installed in Nicosia and Kyrenia districts came into operation. The Police Department announced that the cameras installed at public places and main roads will be carrying out surveillance 24/7 to help curb crime. A special 19-strong unit had been created to operate the system.

On September 13, primary school students who received mostly online education since the beginning of the pandemic returned to their classrooms for face-to-face education. Education at crowded primary schools will be held on a rotational basis. Secondary school students returned to classrooms a day after primary schools. Students had their PCR or rapid tests checked and those who failed to present one were not allowed entry. Within the framework of Covid-19 measures, students aged 12 and above are required to repeat their rapid test every seven days.

In a joint press conference on September 1, the Turkish Cypriot Bar Association, Turkish Cypriot Medical Doctors' Association (KTTB) and Union of the Chambers of Cyprus Turkish Engineers and Architects (KTMMOB) announced that they decided to join their forces to work to overcome pressing challenges faced by the society. 'The problems have reached a level threatening the very existence of the community on the island,' the organizations said in a joint statement. They also noted that the Turkish Cypriots suffer the most from the lack of a comprehensive political settlement on the island. Furthermore, they said that the state fails to fulfil its basic functions in areas ranging from education to health-care services, and civil rights and freedoms. 'It is also an undeniable fact that we are going through a period during which the Turkish Cypriots' character, culture, and the law and institutions are disregarded,' they said, adding that they are gravely concerned about these developments. The three civil society organizations pledged to be an advocate for rule of law and to make recommendations to solve the

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

country's problems.

The senior ruling coalition partner National Unity Party (UBP) will hold its general congress on October 30-31 in Nicosia. Four candidates will be contesting for the top position at the congress: the current leader and Prime Minister Hamza Ersan Saner (MP, Famagusta), Faiz Sucuoglu (MP, Nicosia), Hasan Tacoy (MP, Nicosia) and Zorlu Tore (MP, Nicosia).

The Health Associations Platform staged demonstrations to protest the government and called for better healthcare services. According to Turkish Cypriot weekly Cyprus Today, protesters carried placards and banners bearing slogans such as 'We want to get our medication on time', 'Who is in charge of the care homes?', and 'You are neglecting, we are dying.' The platform spokespersons said that they repeatedly highlighted the right to health and the grave consequences of violating it, and that the right to health has been neglected for years. 'Tens of thousands of people who need health services and medical supplies for chronic diseases and disabilities, as well as for acute reasons [are] deprived of quality and modern health services due to the problems that have been growing exponentially over the years' the statement said.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On September 15, the minimum wage determination commission agreed on an increase of 12.95% setting the minimum wage as 4,970 TL (€498) gross and 4,324 TL (€434) net. The commission, which is made of five representatives of the government, five representatives of employers' and five representatives from the biggest trade union federation, has met three times since late July before finally coming to a consensus. The Turkish Cypriot Public Servants' Union (KTAMS) pointed out that the gap between the minimum wage and the poverty line has been growing. KTAMS said the poverty line by the end of August stood at 4,466 TL (€446), adding that the families who are trying to make ends meet on a minimum wage were being crushed by price

hikes and inflation. The trade union also called for legal amendment to make the minimum wage subject to cost-of-living increments, which the public sector enjoys every six months.

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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



10th
anniversary

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT** 
STIFTUNG



FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

IMPRINT

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

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

Tel. +357 22 377 336
Email: office@fescyprus.org
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 Sophia Papastavrou

Layout:
Stadtformat Einig & Kazmierczak GbR

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

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

Newsletter No.112 SEPTEMBER 21

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

