



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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136
SEPTEMBER 23

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FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

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PODCASTS in OCTOBER:
No podcasts in October



PODCASTS in NOVEMBER:
No podcasts in November

PUBLICATIONS in OCTOBER:
Emine Eminel Sülün

**Repowering the Mediterranean: Reflections on
Grid Infrastructure Diplomacy**

Occasional Paper Series 6 in Cooperation
with PRIO Cyprus Centre
Policy Paper

Emine Eminel Sülün

**Exploring the Political Dynamics of the EuroAsia,
EuroAfrica, and Türkiye-North Cyprus Intercon-
nector Projects: Implications for Cyprus**

Occasional Paper Series 7 in Cooperation
with PRIO Cyprus Centre
Policy Paper



PUBLICATIONS in NOVEMBER:
No publications in November

EVENTS in OCTOBER:
*Corina Drousiotou (Senior Legal Advisor and Coordina-
tor at Cyprus Refugee Council)*

**„Grab A Cypriot Coffee”
Violence Against Migrants in Cyprus**

Date: Thursday, 26th of October
Time: 10:00 am to 10:30 am (EEST / Cyprus time)

Location: Zoom-Seminar

Please register by sending an email to
Office.Cyprus@fes.de



EVENTS in NOVEMBER:
Journalist Seminar 2023

Date: Friday, November 10th, 2023 –
Sunday, November 12th, 2023
Closed Event





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

CYPRUS PROBLEM

In September, the 78th session of the UN General Assembly was held in New York creating some expectations of a breakthrough in the stalemated negotiations process of the Cyprus problem. But neither an anticipated trilateral meeting between the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (“UNSG”) and the respective Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders, Ersin Tatar and Nikos Christodoulides, nor the appointment of a UN special envoy on the Cyprus problem did materialize.

In his address to the UN General Assembly on September 20, Christodoulides advocated for a settlement to the Cyprus Problem in line with the UN agreed framework, in contrast to statements that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made the previous day to the Assembly, claiming that a federal solution was defunct. A much-hyped meeting scheduled between Erdoğan and the UNSG did not materialize, reportedly due to scheduling issues, with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan eventually meeting Guterres. It had been speculated that at the meeting with Erdoğan, Guterres would have brought forward the topic of the appointment of a UN envoy. In his meeting with the UNSG, Fidan appeared positive to the proposal for the appointment of a special envoy but deferred to Tatar as the final decision-maker. Having initially stated he would never accept such an envoy, in an interview with a Turkish Cypriot journalist on September 26, Tatar stated that there could, under certain conditions, be a personal envoy who would work directly with the UNSG.

In New York, Christodoulides failed to announce the resolution of the dispute over Pyla as well as unilateral confidence building measures with the Turkish Cypriots, arguing that these would be announced when the climate was favourable. The Greek Cypriot side managed however to secure the support for an envoy from the five permanent members of the

security council, although Russia argued that an envoy could not be unilaterally appointed by the UNSG and that it is the responsibility of the council to do so. Names of persons who could fill the role of envoy were also discussed.

The upcoming European Council meeting in December 2023 is considered to be the next milestone for the Cyprus Problem where EU-Turkey relations will be discussed.

On September 12, the European Commission adopted the 2023 Annual Action Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, allocating €31.7 million to the community that would facilitate the reunification of the island. The programme offers wide-ranging EU support, including tailored measures to help Turkish Cypriots meet the standards under the halloumi/hellim package before the end of 2024. In 2021, the Commission registered halloumi/hellim as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and issued a decision under which Turkish Cypriot producers will be able to sell PDO-compliant halloumi/hellim across the Green Line, thus placing it on the EU market, once the relevant EU food safety and animal health standards are met. The programme will also continue to support trade across the Green Line and ensure compliance with EU product and production standards. Tailored technical assistance and grants will be offered to local businesses and support to vocational education and training will be provided. This is expected to enhance youth employment and facilitate labour mobility across the Green Line. To build confidence between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities, the programme will continue to provide substantial financing to the Committee on Missing Persons and the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot high school students will be offered support to jointly attend the United World Colleges (UWC) as part of the bi-communal scholarship programme. Civil society organisations will receive

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grants to foster human rights, active citizenship and reconciliation. Finally, in line with efforts to meet the European Green Deal priorities across the island, the programme will further promote energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives.

On September 28, Turkey's National Security Council called for a written agreement between the TRNC¹ and UNFICYP regarding relations between the two. In a statement, the National Security Council said an agreement is necessary to delimit the functions of UNFICYP vis-à-vis its interactions with the TRNC. The United Nations does not recognise the TRNC. Moreover, UN Resolution 541 (1983) deplores the Turkish Cypriot Unilateral Declaration of Independence and considers that declaration as legally void and calls for its withdrawal. Attempts for a separate agreement between the TRNC and UNFICYP have been made in the past, notably in 2018 and 2022, but so far the UN has refused to enter into such agreement.

On September 28 Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar held a meeting with Isabel Santos, the European Parliament's rapporteur on missing persons in Cyprus.

BICOMMUNAL RELATIONS

The term of the third and non-Cypriot member of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP), Paul Henry Arni, has ended. In a press conference held to mark the end of his term, Arni said that 1,033 of the 2,200 missing persons in Cyprus had been found and handed over to their families, and that 571 of them had been found during his 10.5-year stint. In

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

total the success rate so far is 51.5%.

On September 8, a bicommunal event was organized for the completion of the preservation works of the Kalo Chorio / Vuda mosque. The conservation work was carried out by the Bicommunal Technical Committee for Cultural Heritage, with funding from the European Union.

During a bi-communal event commemorating the International Day of Peace (September 21), the mayor of Famagusta, Süleyman Uluçay, expressed the importance of Cyprus serving as a bridge for cooperation and friendship between Greece and Turkey. Simos Ioannou, the Greek Cypriot mayor of Famagusta, who is elected by Greek Cypriot displaced residents of Famagusta living in the southern part of the island, emphasized the urgent need for peace in the region. He stressed that all Cypriots, including Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, as well as Maronites, Armenians, and Latins, should be able to coexist in a homeland characterized by peace and friendship. The event, titled "We are together", took place in the walled city of Famagusta. The event also featured a concert and poetry recitals. Several representatives of foreign missions attended the event, including the top United Nations official in Cyprus, Colin Stewart, British High Commissioner Irfan Siddiq, US Ambassador Julie Fisher, and Italian Ambassador Federica Ferrari Bravo. The main opposition leaders from both sides, Republican Turkish Party (CTP) leader Tufan Erhurman and the Secretary General of AKEL Stefanos Stefanou, also attended the event.

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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On September 23, around 200 runners, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, took part in an 8km run in Nicosia's old town for International Peace Day 2023. Funded by the European Union, the run was organised by the UNDP in collaboration with the UN in Cyprus under the auspices of the Technical Committee for Cultural Heritage, with the bi-communal running team Runite.

HYDROCARBONS

On September 20, the President met with Chevron executives to discuss the exploitation of the Aphrodite field. During the meeting there was an exchange of views in relation to the planning for the utilisation of energy resources in the Cypriot EEZ, as well as a brief reference to the ongoing negotiations of the Republic of Cyprus with the company. From the company's point of view, it was stated that the development of the field in Cyprus' exclusive economic zone ("EEZ") is a priority and is part of its energy plans in the Eastern Mediterranean.

GREEK CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

According to business and consumer survey results released by the Economics Research Centre of the University of Cyprus (CYPERC), economic sentiment in Cyprus deteriorated in September 2023 by 1.6 points in comparison to August 2023. The increase in economic uncertainty in Cyprus was driven by higher levels of uncertainty among consumers and firms, primarily in services and construction.

On September 12, Finance Minister Makis Keravnos met with executives of commercial banks in a crunch meeting aimed at getting lenders to provide some relief to customers to compensate for rising interest rates and mortgage payments. Keravnos argues that banks can absorb a part of the increased lending

rates they charge borrowers. The bankers, who consider the criticism against them to be unfair, reportedly explained to Keravnos that they have already announced various schemes benefitting borrowers. A prior discussion in parliament confirmed that Cyprus has little to no leeway to tamper with interest rates, which are set by the European Central Bank (ECB).

On September 20, Cyprus received a loan of over €350m from the European Investment Bank (EIB) to boost social cohesion. The loan was given in the framework of the EU programme Thalia.

According to a report by the Central Bank of Cyprus (CBC), Cyprus experienced a net increase of €8.5m in total loans during the month of August 2023, following a significant reduction of €100m in the previous month. Deposits continued to decrease for the second consecutive month. According to the CBC, total deposits in August 2023 witnessed a net reduction of €175.5m, compared to a net reduction of €301.1m in July 2023. This resulted in an annual growth rate of 1.7 %, down from 2.4 % in July 2023. Total deposits in August 2023 amounted to €51.8bn, compared to €51.5bn in August 2022.

The CBC, on September 25, made a slight downward revision to its growth forecasts for 2023 and 2024, according to its latest macroeconomic projections. The CBC now estimates that the growth rate of the Cypriot GDP will stand at 2.4% for the current year and 2.7% in 2024, down from its previous projections of 2.6% and 2.8%, respectively, made in June 2023. The CBC explained that the minor downward adjustment is in part due to the impacts of sanctions resulting from the ongoing war in Ukraine, affecting the professional services sector, in conjunction with the adverse effects of the fragile external environment on non-tourism services.

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On September 27, the Council of Ministers approved the first budget of the new government with promises of effective support for the middle class, fiscal responsibility, and achieving EU sponsored goals of green and digital transformation. The approval of the budget comes amid renewed calls for fuel subsidies, unions calling for greater relief from the cost of living, and concerns over a looming recession in Europe. President Christodoulides referred to the finance minister's estimated growth rate for Cyprus of 2.9% in 2024 and said the fiscal balance for 2024 is estimated to show a surplus reaching 2.2% of GDP, a sum of €659m. He added that the medium-term goal is to reduce public debt to 60% by 2026. The budget also allows for development spending to be increased 12% higher than last year's, with social benefits spending also set to rise by 15%, amounting to €2bn.

Cyprus experienced a significant rebound in inflation in August 2023, primarily attributed to the surge in food prices, effectively ending a year-long period of declining prices since its peak in July 2022 when it reached a record high of 10.6%. Compared to the previous month, inflation rose by 1.1% in August 2023 and by 3.1% compared to the same month in 2022. The consumer protection service stated that increases in 25 categories of basic products in a total of 45 categories were recorded for the month of August. Amid mounting complaints over the cost of living, Finance Minister Makis Keravnos stated on September 28 that the government may bring back electricity and fuel tax subsidies in the near future.

Domestic Developments

On September 28, the president appointed journalist Yiannis Antoniou as the new deputy government spokesperson. Antoniou will be replacing Doxa Komodromou, who resigned following a scandal on her overtime pay.

Meanwhile the audit office is investigating a complaint that claims that Christodoulides received substantial benefits above his post between 2013 and 2018 while he was working at the presidential palace and seconded from the foreign office. The complaint alleges that Christodoulides had received, among other things, benefits while working for the president that included the salary of the director of the president's diplomatic office, representation allowance of the government spokesperson, a service vehicle, and police guards.

At a meeting held on September 12, the DISY leadership briefed its senior members on the party's path ahead as it decided to remain in opposition. Haris Georgiades is to replace Michalis Sofocleous as head of the Glafcos Clerides Institute, dedicated to the party's founder. In his resignation, Sofocleous warned that the party is at risk of losing its identity and could diverge from being a pluralistic party to a vehicle of serving private interests. The meeting also saw the top branch briefed on the latest developments on the Cyprus problem.

Cypriot-born Christos Stylianides has been named shipping minister in Greece, following the resignation of Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, who caused controversy with his statements over the death of a passenger pushed off a ferry boat. Stylianides was government spokesman in Cyprus for President Glafcos Clerides' government between 1998-99 and for President Nicos Anastasiades' government between 2013-14.

Intensive moves are underway to create a new political party on the island called Volt Cyprus, which will focus on resolving the Cyprus problem, modernizing the country and achieving European integration. The new party will join Volt Europa, the pan-European party founded by citizens in a response to populism, nationalism and partisanship. Taking part in the efforts to form the new party are the Famagusta - For Cyprus party and the New Wave political movement,

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in addition to several independent figures who share the vision for a reunited federal Cyprus, in a united Europe. Founders of Famagusta – For Cyprus, Anna Marangou and Christakis Nikita, and the founder of New Wave, Constantinos Christofides, have, according to daily Politis, given the green light for the two parties to merge to create the new party. According to the daily, a founding congress will be held on November 19 to elect the leadership.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On September 5, the Parliamentary Committee on Labour discussed the draft law regulating teleworking. The initial plans of the Ministry of Labour were to have it approved by the Plenary of the Parliament before the summer recess. However, these plans were overturned after the intervention of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection, as there was no prior consultation with her office regarding the proposed legislation, nor was her input sought regarding data protection issues. This, along with disagreements and objections from social partners on certain provisions of the proposed legislation, became a hindering factor in advancing the bill for a vote in the Plenary.

Nevertheless, the recommendations of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection were incorporated into the revised draft law regulating teleworking in the private sector. Changes were made regarding employee monitoring, the right to disconnect, and performance evaluation of employees. It is worth mentioning that in the revised draft, it is clarified that teleworking is optional and agreed upon between the employer and the employee either at the time of hiring, through a modification of the employment contract, or through a collective agreement. The draft law explicitly states that any unfavourable treatment of an employee who does not consent to teleworking is prohibited. Additionally, teleworking can be implemented upon the employer's decision for public health reasons, provided

that a relevant ministerial decree based on the Law on Epidemics is issued. The employer is responsible for covering the costs incurred by the employee for teleworking equipment, unless the use of the employer's equipment is agreed upon, as well as the costs of using the home workspace. The employer is also required to cover the costs of telecommunications and maintaining and repairing equipment, specifying the ways in which these costs will be covered. The draft law explicitly states that continuous monitoring of employees using a webcam or similar intrusive application to control their performance is not allowed. Furthermore, employees teleworking have the right to disconnect from the electronic means through which they provide remote services after completing their work and reaching the end of their working hours. The responsibility for ensuring the full and effective implementation of the provisions of the proposed law, either through self-initiated investigations or by examining complaints filed due to disputes arising, lies with inspectors appointed by the ministry.

According to the revised draft law, it does not cover public sector employees, educational personnel, emergency public services, armed forces, law enforcement authorities, judges, prosecutors, and other law enforcement services. As for the regulation of teleworking in the public sector, it was clarified that there is no urgent need for its regulation, as the deadline for the implementation of the national Recovery and Resilience Plan is the end of 2024. The Commissioner for Personal Data Protection mentioned that legal entities of public law have their own legislations regulating teleworking. In the meantime, the proposal of the Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB) to suspend the national-level process for regulating teleworking is still on the table, pending the outcome of negotiations taking place at the European level among European Social Partners, which will lead to the issuance of a Directive binding on all member states.





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On September 14, the Union of Cypriot Pensioners (EKYSY) called on the Government to provide compensatory benefits to retirees who have suffered significant financial losses due to increased inflation. In their statement, UCP emphasized the urgent need to reintroduce subsidies for electricity and reduce consumption tax on fuel to halt the chain reactions affecting retirees' living standards. They further criticized the decision of the Council of Ministers to apply a zero VAT rate on coffee and sugar, considering it at best a joke and a mockery, given that the benefit to consumers would be minimal.

On September 25, the Pan-Cyprian Federation of Labour Equality (ISOTITA) sent a letter to the Director General of the Ministry of Interior and the District Officers, urging compliance of the Republic of Cyprus with the provisions of the Directive and its harmonizing law regarding employment practices. Specifically, ISOTITA referred to the issue of lifeguards, who, despite being hired to cover permanent and ongoing service needs, are employed through successive fixed-term contracts. The federation called on the competent authority to promptly address this serious issue, which involves the violation of labour rights of hundreds of workers, causing them significant stress and hardship due to the lack of job stability. They also urged the authorities to take all necessary measures, including regulatory actions and initiatives, to eliminate and terminate illegal and abusive provisions/practices, ensuring full and substantial compliance of the Republic of Cyprus with the specific Directive.

On September 25, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth and the Trade Unions for the regulation of the employment of hired staff in the supportive educational programmes of the Ministry. The agreement was made to cover the employment with fixed-term contracts of these workers to meet the service needs related to various programmes for the aca-

ademic year 2023-2024. According to the announcement, "through the efforts of the Trade Unions and the workers in the programmes to abolish the market of services, the above agreement has been reached, which provides for the granting of fixed-term employment rights as applied in the Public Service". Both parties agreed to initiate immediate discussions on the operation of the programmes and the labour rights of employees in these programmes for the coming years, with the dialogue expected to be completed by the end of December 2023.

TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 81.2% higher in September 2023 compared to September 2022. Consumer prices had risen by 3.3% in September alone. The highest monthly inflation was in the education sector, where an increase of 17.9% was recorded. Prices in the "alcoholic drinks and tobacco," "furniture and house appliances," and "housing and utilities" categories went up by 9.9%, 4.7% and 3.8%, respectively. The monthly food inflation was recorded as 4.5%.

The Statistical Institute announced that the real GDP grew by 13.3% in 2022; it is still slightly below the GDP level of 2019 in real terms. The highest growth in 2022 was recorded in the trade and tourism sector with 40.9%, followed by the import taxes with 34.8%, and the transportation and communications sector with 25.9%. Agriculture, on the other hand, shrank by 5.3%.

The Central Bank's second quarterly bulletin showed that total budget revenues reached TL7,816m (€279m) in the April-June period, while government expenditure reached TL7,948m (€284m), resulting in a budget deficit of TL132.5m (€5m). The Ministry of Finance borrowed TL1,091m (€39m) in the quar-

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ter concerned. The bulletin also stated that 86% of bank deposits were kept in foreign currency.

According to the tourism statistics released by the Ministry of Tourism, the number of arrivals via air and seaports increased by 37% in the first eight months of 2023 compared to the same period of 2022. The number of arrivals via crossing points also went up by 15%. In a similar vein, the number of overnight stays by foreigners increased by 13% while the occupancy rate at touristic facilities went up by 6% to reach 43%.

Relations with Turkey

There is nothing to report.

Domestic Developments

The new legal year started on September 18 with a ceremony where the Chief Justice, the Attorney General and the President of the Bar Association evaluated the past year. The Chief Justice, Narin Ferdi Sefik, said that the biggest problem in the country is non-compliance with the rules. Sefik emphasized that breaking the rules is a serious problem not only among people but also in administrative mechanisms. Pointing out that there are not enough judges [and other personnel] to cope with the number of cases before the court, Sefik said that judges are overwhelmed. For his part, Attorney General Sarper Altincik said that his office is under a heavy workload and has personnel, vehicle and infrastructure problems, adding that traffic, drug and sexual harassment cases have been on the rise. He also drew attention to the rise in crimes committed by public personnel and said that effective punishment is important in terms of deterrence. Finally, Hasan Esendagli, the President of the Bar Association, said that 2023 went down in history as one of the worst years for the Turkish Cypriot people. Esendagli said that “the respect, trust, faith and loyalty of the Turkish Cypriot community to the TRNC state has been seriously damaged and has almost come to the point

of disappearing,” and that this “is our biggest problem, above specific issues”.

President Ersin Tatar has been ordered in court to pay a fine of TL20,000 (€680) to the Turkish Cypriot daily Ozgur Gazete for remarks made about the newspaper during the 2020 presidential election campaign. At the time, Ozgur Gazete published an article alleging a team of 20 people from AKP’s campaign division, including then Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay’s press advisor, were holding daily meetings with Tatar and his campaign team at a hotel in Kyrenia. Tatar, who was the Prime Minister at the time, had his office release a statement accusing the newspaper’s employees of being “spies and agents” for foreign intelligence organisations. The newspaper’s editor-in-chief, Pinar Barut, said the court’s decision was “very important for Turkish Cypriot press and journalists”, and added, “we were only doing journalism by documenting the interventions against the will of the Turkish Cypriot community and secret meetings.”

The northern part of the island is currently embroiled in an ongoing investigation regarding a scam aimed at defrauding the Social Security Department of around TL60m (approximately €2.1m). The allegations revolve around doctors who allegedly provided fake prescriptions to pharmacists, leading to substantial financial gains for both parties involved. Allegedly, the pharmacists involved sold the medications, which had already been paid for by the Social Security Department, to other patients. Umut Öksüz, president of the Pharmacists Association, identified the main issue was gaps within the social security system, attributing the problem to the absence of a comprehensive medicine tracking system. Öksüz said that he had learned that 20 pharmacies were under the spotlight but had no further details. As part of the investigation, several doctors and pharmacists were arrested including a doctor who served as a member of parliament in the past. A





statement from the Prime Minister's Office said that the investigation is "continuing and being widened". Earlier in the month, the police started a comprehensive investigation of two Iranian citizens who were arrested for issuing residency permits in exchange for money. The accused are employees of the company that set up the system for the Ministry of Interior and, therefore, had access to the Immigration Department's database.

Interior Minister Dursun Oğuz issued a statement regarding an incident involving an individual who posted an advertisement on social media offering TRNC citizenship. According to Oğuz, the person responsible has been arrested in Turkey.

The main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) filed a court case against the government decision to grant a tax amnesty of €59 million to T&T, which operates the Ercan (Tymbou) Airport, citing the losses incurred by the company due to the Covid-19 restrictions. A statement issued by CTP on September 25 said that the decision was "against the law and public interest". Members of the CTP also drew attention to the matter by displaying a banner during a small protest claiming that the amount could be used to build 75 new schools.

CTP leader Tufan Erhurman has voiced concerns about the public education system, highlighting issues such as teacher shortages, overcrowded classrooms, inadequacies in school infrastructure, and the increasing number of non-Turkish speaking students in public schools. Erhurman said: "While we are grappling with all of these, we do not even have the time to talk about the quality of the education we provide to our children....Books are a disaster. Education expenses for families are going through the roof. The gap between private schools and public schools is getting constantly widening. Meanwhile ... parents whose children are in private schools are overwhelmed financially."

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

North Cyprus has one of the highest rates of food price inflation in the world, Güven Bengihan, the leader of KTAMS (Union of Public Servants) claimed. Bengihan said that the country ranks fifth globally in terms of food inflation and overall cost of living. In a demonstration held in front of the Prime Minister's office on September 8, Bengihan also voiced criticism regarding the methodology used to calculate the cost of living and the minimum wage. He also pointed out that once again minimum wage, which is TL15,750 (€540), fell below the hunger line, which is TL16,526 (€566). He accused the government of neglecting the minimum wage issue and called for a revision of the basket of goods and services used to determine the cost of living, pointing out that the basket was last updated in 2013. In response to a question about how often cost of living adjustments (COLA) would be applied to public sector wages, Bengihan said that the Prime Minister had reached an agreement with the unions to implement these adjustments every four months instead of every six months, starting in 2024. Bengihan stressed that it is crucial to align the private sector minimum wage adjustments with those of the public sector, and that some ministers have already pledged to address this issue.

On September 18, Selma Eylem, the president of the Secondary Education Teachers Union (KTOEOS), announced that her union's members would not take part in afternoon classes in schools. The government, which plans to move to a "full-day education" in stages, had announced earlier that this would begin in the 2023-2024 academic year, with afternoon classes provided two days a week — Mondays and Tuesdays — instead of only on Mondays. Eylem claimed that the government had ignored suggestions from KTOEOS to carry out a pilot for full-time education, saying that the Ministry will be responsible for any "chaos" that may ensue. "We will continue to fight against unilateral decisions that ignore teachers and





their union...and stand up to this mentality that tries to suppress rights and freedoms,” she said. Eylem also pointed out problems such as funding, transportation and infrastructure shortcomings. She also criticized the hiring of teachers from Turkey, as well as the role of religion in the curriculum.

On September 29, El-Sen, the trade union for employees of the Electricity Authority (Kib-Tek), announced that it sued the authority over the hiring of workers who had been employed without vacancy announcements and recruitment examinations. The union’s secretary general, Ahmet Tuğcu, said, “As the public knows, in recent days, Kib-Tek has employed people without any vacancies advertised or examinations sat. El-Sen is against this. Our union defends merit and is against nepotism.... As a rule, in all collective bargaining agreements in force since 2019, it is stated that employment to Kib-Tek must be made through a publicly advertised vacancy and a written examination.” The controversy came to light earlier in September after it was discovered that first 63 people and then another 16 people, including the son of El-Sen leader Çağlayan Cesurer, were hired without any vacancy announcement and examination. Cesurer maintains his innocence but transferred his responsibilities and duties to Tuğcu.





SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Yiannis Charalambous

Yiannis Charalambous has been a Research Assistant for FES Cyprus contributing to the writing of the monthly FES Cyprus Newsletter since July 2012. Yiannis obtained a Bachelor's degree in Turkish Studies from the National Kapodistrian University of Athens and an MA in International Relations and European Studies from the University of Nicosia. The subject of his dissertation focused on evaluating the catalyst effect in resolving the Cyprus problem, by comparing the factors of EU membership and the discovery of hydrocarbons. Yiannis speaks Greek, English and Turkish.

Gianna Chatzigeorgiou

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

Hubert Faustmann

Hubert Faustmann is a Professor of History and International Relations at the University of Nicosia. Additionally, he is the director of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus. He is an expert on British colonial Cyprus and post-independence Cypriot history and politics. His research also focuses on Hydrocarbon politics in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as the relationship between state and society with a focus on Political Culture, Clientelism and Political Patronage.

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