



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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148
SEPTEMBER 24

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HEADLINES

An informal tripartite meeting, to exchange views on the course of the Cyprus problem between United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, Nikos Christodoulides and Ersin Tatar, will be held on October 15, in New York.

Agreement was reached for the proposed electrical interconnection between Cyprus and Crete with the cost of €125m being covered by the state's greenhouse gas emissions rights fund, instead of by consumers.

Auditor General Odysseas Michaelides was dismissed from his duties after a panel of Supreme Court judges unanimously ruled he was unfit for duty, citing inappropriate conduct.

Cyprus HRDA unveiled a study on green job needs and skills for a climate-neutral economy.

Trade unions rejected a mediation proposal for a hotel industry collective agreement.





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PODCASTS in OCTOBER:
No podcasts in October



PODCASTS in NOVEMBER:
No podcasts in November

PUBLICATIONS in OCTOBER:
No publications in October



PUBLICATIONS in NOVEMBER:
No publications in November

EVENTS in OCTOBER:

Hubert Faustmann, Camille Lons, Yahia Zoubir, Erato Kozakou - Markoulis and Naser al-Tamimi

**Cyprus Forum - Venue C - Panel Discussion:
„Saviour, Ally, Competitor? Which Role for China in
the Middle East and North Africa?“**

Date: Thursday, 3rd October 2024

Time: 11:30 - 13:00 (EEST / Cyprus time)

Location: Nicosia Old Town Hall - Cornaro

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Dr. Carsten Wieland

„Grab a Cypriot Coffee“

In the Eye of the Storm?

**Violent Conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean
and their Impact on Cyprus**

Date: Tuesday, 29th October 2024

Time: 10:00 am – 10:30 am (EEST / Cyprus time)

Location: Zoom Seminar

Kindly RSVP by October 28th to receive the Zoom
link by emailing office.cyprus@fes.de



EVENTS in NOVEMBER:
No events planned so far

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CYPRUS PROBLEM & INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

The 79th United Nations General Assembly took place in New York between September 24 and September 30, providing an opportunity for the stakeholders of the Cyprus problem to either directly meet UN Secretary General António Guterres or to address the UN General Assembly and express their views on the Cyprus problem.

On September 23, President Nikos Christodoulides met with Guterres where they discussed the prospects of resuming negotiations. Christodoulides reiterated his readiness to resume negotiations from where they left off and to accept any date the UN Secretary-General deemed appropriate for a joint meeting.

On September 24, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan addressed the Assembly. During his speech, Erdoğan argued that the federal model for a solution to the Cyprus problem has completely lost its validity and therefore called on the UN's member states to recognise the TRNC as an independent country.¹ The Turkish President stressed that there are two separate states and two separate peoples in Cyprus, and that the acquired rights of the Turkish Cypriots, namely their sovereign equality and equal international status, must be re-committed. He also briefly spoke about Turkey's maritime claims in the Eastern Mediterranean, arguing that Turkey's role as the country with the longest coastline in the Eastern Mediterranean is "undeniable". Erdoğan noted that Turkey has rights in its declared continental shelf to the north and west of the island of Cyprus, while

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

the Turkish Cypriots have rights around the entire island.

On the same day, Erdoğan also met with Guterres. Following the meeting, Turkey's communications directorate released a statement according to which Erdoğan reportedly reiterated to Guterres the following:

- The Turkish Cypriot side wants its rights, such as sovereign equality and equal international status, to be registered;
- The possibilities for a solution other than a federation can be discussed in a meeting under the auspices of the UN and with the participation of both sides;
- The recognition of the TRNC will be the key to a solution taking into account the realities on the island.

On September 25, Christodoulides took the opportunity to respond to Erdoğan in his own address to the Assembly, calling the Turkish President's remarks as revisionist and illegal under international law. Christodoulides issued a direct message to Erdoğan relaying that "now is the time to deliver on your proclaimed commitment to international law and to peace" and that "no country that believes in the moral superiority of its position refuses to sit at the negotiating table". The Cypriot President reiterated his readiness to resume negotiations for a viable solution, stressing that Cyprus cannot afford to remain in the current status quo. He reminded the Assembly that 50 years have passed since the Turkish invasion of approximately 37% of the territory

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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of the Republic of Cyprus, a sovereign EU member state, which represents a continuous violation of the UN Charter and international law.

While addressing the Assembly on September 27, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis stated that a two-state solution to the Cyprus problem cannot happen and cannot be accepted. Mitsotakis reaffirmed his country's support for a bizonal, bi-communal federal solution based on one sovereignty, one citizenship, and one international personality, in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions. He also spoke briefly on the improving relations between Greece and Turkey and called for the delimitation of the two countries' maritime exclusive economic zones ("EEZ") both in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the Aegean.

On September 27, Christodoulides held a working lunch with the five permanent UN Security Council members in New York where they discussed growing concerns over the region, as well as the Cyprus problem. All five permanent members of the Security Council – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – reaffirmed their commitment and their clear will to the agreed framework of a solution to the Cyprus problem, as set out in all relevant Security Council resolutions.

On September 28, Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar met with Guterres on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. In a statement following the meeting, Tatar stated that the efforts of the UNSG's personal envoy, María Holguín Cuéllar, did not bring positive results because there is no positive ground between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Tatar reiterated that the Turkish Cypriots are ready to start a new and formal negotiation process for the final solution of the Cyprus problem if their sovereign equality and equal international status are accepted. Tatar also argued that the Greek Cypriot leadership aims to destroy the Turkish Cypriot economy by arresting investors, trying to discredit higher education insti-

tutions and preventing tourism organisations from organising trips to the north. Tatar also thanked the Turkish President for stating in his speech to the Assembly on the Cyprus problem that the world should benefit from direct flights, direct trade and direct contacts with the TRNC.

On September 30, UN spokesman Stéphane Dujarric stated that during his recent bilateral meetings in New York, the UNSG had invited the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus to an informal tripartite meeting in October, in New York, to exchange views on the course of the Cyprus problem. According to Dujarric, both Christodoulides and Tatar accepted the invitation. Tatar announced that he had agreed to attend an informal dinner as long as there was no formality in the context of talks on the Cyprus problem. To this end, he said that based on the lack of common ground found between Cyprus' two sides, an environment could be created for a 4+1 informal consultation, involving the Turkish Cypriots, Turkey, the Greek Cypriots, Greece, and Guterres, to discuss how the future of Cyprus would be shaped. The meeting will be held on October 15.

According to Cyprus Mail, both sides expressed general satisfaction with the Council of Europe's committee of ministers' decisions (dated September 20) regarding the originally Greek Cypriot-owned properties in the north. The committee had issued two decisions and one resolution. The resolution it issued was to close its examination of one case, wherein the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) had compensated the property's Greek Cypriot owner. The committee noted that Turkey had fulfilled its obligations under the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruling and closed the case, but it emphasised that this did not affect its evaluation of broader property rights issues for displaced Greek Cypriots. The committee decided to continue reviewing the Xenides-Arestis case and the broader Cyprus v. Turkey case in its next session in June. The RoC's foreign ministry welcomed the decisions

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as “positive developments”, reaffirming that Turkey persists in violating property rights in the north. In contrast, the TRNC foreign ministry highlighted the IPC had closed the case where payment had been made, stating that the IPC remains an “effective domestic remedy”, and that the committee confirmed the legitimacy of the property regime within the context of the IPC.

As of September 13, the IPC has processed a total of 7,734 applications, according to the commission’s president Növber Ferit Veçhi. Out of these, 1,840 cases have been concluded, with £467,060,546 having been awarded in compensation to applicants. In an interview with the Turkish Cypriot public news agency (TAK), the head of the IPC, Növber Ferit Veçhi, provided a detailed update on the Commission’s work, highlighting that, in addition to the compensation awarded, 15 cases involved property restitution, two cases were settled through property exchange and compensation, and one case was resolved through restitution. Furthermore, 10 cases were concluded under the provisions of Law 13/2008, allowing the applicants to purchase properties by reaching an agreement with the Greek Cypriot owners. Veçhi noted that 5,894 applications remain under various stages of review. Of these, 3,739 have already had opinions submitted, while 2,215 are awaiting additional documentation from applicants. A total of 1,524 cases have been assigned hearing dates to facilitate their resolution.

Meanwhile, on September 27, the trial of Israeli property developer Simon Mistriél Aykut, who is accused of developing and selling €43 million worth of Greek Cypriot property in the north, was adjourned until October 18. Aykut will remain in custody at least until then, with the court having decided at a previous hearing in June that Aykut’s ties to the RoC are “non-existent”, and it was argued that there was a “visible risk of him fleeing”. His lawyers had argued that the chances of him fleeing were remote and re-

ferred to “health problems” he suffers from, while also suggesting his safety may be put at risk in custody due to his nationality.

On September 27, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus, Colin Stewart, welcomed the arrival of Pierre Gentile, who assumed his responsibilities as the new UN Third Member of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP). Gentile succeeds Paul-Henri Arni, who concluded his assignment with the CMP in August 2023. Prior to joining the United Nations in Cyprus, Gentile, a Swiss national, was the Director of the Social Centre for the Integration of Refugees (CSIR) in Lausanne. In welcoming Gentile, Special Representative Stewart praised the CMP project, which is an effective mechanism to identify and return the remains of missing individuals, ending the uncertainty which has affected the families of missing persons for many years and demonstrating the good cooperation between the two communities.

HYDROCARBONS

On September 21, Cypriot Energy Minister George Papanastasiou and his Greek counterpart, Theodoros Skylakakis, signed a framework of understanding regarding the section of the Great Sea Interconnector which will connect Cyprus to the Greek island of Crete. A day earlier, Cyprus’ electricity regulatory authority (CERA) approved the cabinet’s decision, adopting the requests of Greece’s Independent Power Transmission Operator (IPTO). Specifically, CERA greenlighted the decision that the Republic of Cyprus will pay €25m per year from January 2025 through to December 2029. The total maximum revenue allowed to be recovered for the five years was set at €125m. The amounts would be disbursed from the auctioning of greenhouse gas emissions rights fund, so that consumers are not burdened by the increased costs. The Cypriot state is still considering whether to participate as a shareholder in





the project, pending a due diligence report to assess the pros and cons from both a technical and a financial standpoint. The Great Sea Interconnector project, which has been described as a project of strategic importance, is currently estimated to cost €1.9bn and provides for a submarine electricity cable linking Cyprus to Crete. It seeks to connect the island's grid to the European grid, enhancing energy security. The project had been stalled for concerns regarding its financing and viability, as well for geopolitical concerns including the fear that Turkey may interrupt the project. The impasse prompted fears that the European Commission would withdraw a €657m grant for the project.

On September 27, Christodoulides and Vice President of Chevron Frank Kasalo reaffirmed their support for the development of the Aphrodite gas field in Cyprus' EEZ. The announcement was made from New York following Christodoulides' meeting with a delegation of the US energy firm. Discussions are to be held in the next four months. The consortium that holds the license to develop the field had announced that it filed an amended development and production plan worth \$4bn with the Ministry of Energy on September 2.

During his time in New York, Christodoulides met with government representatives from Greece, France and the UAE to discuss the electricity interconnection project between Greece and Cyprus. According to Christodoulides, there is strong French interest in participating in the implementation of the Great Sea Interconnector. Meanwhile a meeting is reportedly expected to be held at the technocratic level to proceed with all the necessary processes regarding the joint participation of the Abu Dhabi National Energy Company in the project.

GREEK CYPRIOTS

Gender Developments

No notable developments occurred.

Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

On September 5, the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) of Cyprus presented a study aiming to identify the needs for green jobs in the country. The study, titled "Identification of Needs for Green Jobs and Skills in the Cypriot Economy 2024-2030", assesses the labour market's requirements in the transition towards a climate-neutral economy. It emphasises the connection between education, training, and the demands of green development. Additionally, the study reveals a broad range of professional categories involved in the green economy, which should be incorporated into lifelong learning activities. The chairman of the HRDA pointed out that the dual green and digital transitions promoted by the European Union will inevitably reshape labour market demands, requiring new skills, and he emphasised the need for the systematic monitoring and analysing of market trends to predict future employment needs in terms of both numbers and required skills.

On September 26, the European Commission sent a letter of formal notice to Cyprus calling the island to speed up issuing permissions for renewable energy projects. The letter said Cyprus must transpose agreed rules to accelerate permitting procedures for renewable energy projects, referring to the European Union's revised renewable energy directive, which entered into force in November 2023. The letter came just a day after Cyprus' environment commissioner, Antonia Theodosiou, had described the country's transition to renewable energy sources as "slow", despite the availability of the natural resources, including abundant sunshine.





Domestic Developments

On September 24, Christodoulides announced that Andreas Papaconstantinou will be replacing Odysseas Michaelides as the new Auditor-General. Michaelides was dismissed from his duties after a panel of eight judges of the Supreme Constitutional Court unanimously decided on September 18 that he was unfit for duty, citing inappropriate conduct. The 209-page decision was reportedly hard-hitting, saying Michaelides repeatedly misinformed the public, crossed the line and did not even do the bare minimum his role demanded of him in terms of conduct. Thousands of people protested against Michaelides' dismissal, alleging corruption of the system of justice. Meanwhile, according to a post on his social media, Cypriot MEP Fidas Panayiotou submitted a parliamentary question to the European Commission regarding the rule of law in Cyprus and the dismissal of the Auditor-General. According to Panayiotou, Michaelides may have been dismissed due to his well-known anti-corruption activities. Papaconstantinou will officially be sworn in on October 2.

On September 29, Christodoulides dismissed police chief Stelios Papatheodorou and his deputy Demetris Demetriou. They were replaced by Themistos Arnaoutis, as the chief of police, and Panicos Stavrou, as his deputy. The move followed the escape, on September 26, of Doros Theofanous, a convicted murderer, while he was being guarded by four prison officers and three special police unit officers on a scheduled trip from the central prison to his family home. Theofanous was found and arrested on September 29.

Foreign Relations

There was nothing to report.

Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

On September 2, the trade unions SEK and PEO rejected the mediation proposal for the renewal of the

collective agreement in the hotel industry. This decision was made after the hotel workers organisations reviewed the proposal put forward by the director of the Department of Labour Relations. The unions felt the proposal did not address key issues raised by hotel workers, including terms regarding the 13th salary and other conditions that could further destabilise labour relations in the hospitality sector. The unions also found the proposal unbalanced and lacking mutual benefits, and they argued that the proposed wage increases, in conjunction with the contract's duration, would cause problems. They urged the Department of Labour Relations to declare an impasse, allowing unions to take their own path, possibly leading to industrial action following the Industrial Relations Code. On the other side, the hotel associations, STEK and PASYXE, initially appeared to support the proposal, but this may change following the unions' rejection. The mediation proposal includes a total wage increase of 8.5% over a five-year period, with annual raises of 1.7%. It also suggests legislation to guarantee a 13th salary for all hotel employees, starting from January 1, 2025, and an approximately 50% increase in holiday and split-shift allowances. If no revised proposal is made, the unions warned they may resort to dynamic measures, including strikes. Following the reaction of the trade unions, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance called a meeting to continue the social dialogue with the partners.

On September 3, the parliamentary Labour Committee resumed its work, focusing on key legislative issues. The first meeting addressed a package of bills aimed at regulating undeclared work. Concurrently the committee chairman highlighted a series of issues that will be a priority for the committee in the near future. More specifically, the chairman mentioned a bill on teleworking in the public sector, which must be legislated by year-end to meet Cyprus' commitments; reform of the pension system, particularly addressing the 12% penalty for early





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retirement; ensuring pension rights for widowers whose spouses died before 2018, correcting legislative gaps; regulation of paid internships for young people; addressing challenges faced by the elderly, such as high insurance premiums and restricted banking services; and re-examination of store operating hours, especially Sunday work, which remains a point of contention between the government and parliament. Additionally, the committee will focus on establishing a proper Social Security Fund through safe investments. Legislative changes concerning single-parent allowances and self-employed workers' rights are also on the table, alongside efforts to address overcharging of elderly drivers and to improve welfare services.

On September 4, the Cabinet decided to proceed with the revision of the legal framework on pensions with two bills as part of Christodoulides' government's institutional reforms. The planned reforms include raising the retirement age for officials from 60 to 65 and allowing them to waive state pensions if they hold multiple public positions. These changes aim to address the issue of officials receiving multiple pensions, an ongoing problem. The Parliamentary Finance Committee is set to discuss the 11 proposals on September 9, with the goal of resolving the issue before the discussion of the state budget in mid-October. Several proposals, including one by the Auditor General, extend the retirement age for ministers, deputies, and mayors to 65. Another proposal calls for taxing pensions that exceed €70,000 annually by 90%. Efforts to address multiple pensions have been ongoing for years, with a previous attempt in 2011 under the Christofias administration being overturned by the Supreme Court in 2014 for being unconstitutional. Recent efforts, including discussions between government and opposition, are aimed at finding a compromise that would combine elements from both government and parliamentary proposals.

On September 13, the Cyprus Union of Pensioners (EKYSY) announced that it is planning a nationwide conference and a protest event outside the Ministry of Finance on October 3. During regional meetings, EKYSY's General Secretary, Kostas Skarparis, and the Nicosia Secretary of PEO, Eftyhis Papamichael, informed attendees about the union's ongoing efforts to address serious problems that have persisted in recent years. They emphasised that the government has failed to show the necessary social sensitivity to resolve these issues, noting that the rising cost of living continues to dramatically lower the standard of living for pensioners.

On September 16, the unions within the Cyprus Health Services Organisation (OKYpY) decided to initiate a 24-hour strike in the first half of October and escalate their measures at state hospitals because of the stagnation observed in negotiations with OKYpY for the establishment of a collective agreement for its staff.

On September 18, trade unions SEK, PEO, and DEOK, representing employees in Ready-Mix Concrete Manufacturing Companies, organised a general assembly for their members. The assembly was organised because the Ready-Mix Concrete Manufacturers Association had not engaged in negotiations for the renewal of the national collective agreement. The unions had submitted requests to renew the two-year collective agreement, covering the period from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025. Their proposal includes wage increases and the restoration of overtime pay to its original form, which had been temporarily altered.

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On September 23, the trade unions in Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC-RIK), PEO and SEK, announced strike measures as their initial response to the non-payment of pension benefits to retired employees and the failure to implement the relevant legislation (210(I)/2022). Furthermore, they indicated the possibility of further actions in the near future.

On September 24, the Director General of the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare announced that they are considering to increase the amount of 42 allowances provided by the ministry and to modernise the payment processes. The director mentioned that they are preparing a study on the state's allowance policies and the services offered by the Deputy Ministry. He indicated that they had identified 42 different allowances and expressed hope that by the end of the year, there would be specific outcomes leading to either new plans, modifications of existing plans, or legislative proposals.

On September 30, the bill concerning a general salary increase of 1.5% for state employees and pensions for state service retirees, as well as a corresponding increase in the remuneration for the chairpersons and members of the Public Service Commission and the Educational Service Commission, will be examined by the House Finance Committee. The estimated cost of providing a 1.5% general increase in salaries and pensions is €12 million for 2024 and €40.7 million for 2025.

TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Gender Developments

No notable developments occurred during the month of September.

Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 63.57% higher in September 2024 compared to September 2023. Consumer prices have risen by 2.53% in September alone; the inflation rate in the first nine months of 2024 has reached 45.76%. The monthly food inflation was 0.95%. The highest monthly inflation was in the "education" segment where an increase of 31.59% was recorded; the second highest was in the "alcoholic drinks and tobacco" segment with 7.43%.

The high cost of living has pushed the tourism sector to the brink of extinction, according to the Travel Agencies Association president Orhan Tolun. He explained that because Ercan (Tymbou) Airport isn't classified as a domestic line, airlines set their own prices, making travel to the TRNC prohibitively expensive. In addition to commenting on soaring ticket prices, Tolun highlighted that price hikes have significantly increased overall costs in the country. He lamented that due to these high prices, hotels and restaurants have become more expensive than those in both south Cyprus and Turkey: "We've reached a point where restaurants are more expensive than in the south. Your plane tickets are expensive, your hotels are expensive, your restaurants are expensive. In that case, how will you be able to compete?"

T&T, which operates Ercan (Tymbou) Airport has reported a significant increase in both passenger and aircraft traffic following the opening of the new terminal and runway in July 2023. According to a statement, in the first eight months of 2024, there was a 24.7% rise in the number of passengers and a 14.28% increase in aircraft compared to the same period in 2023.

The Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce (TCCC) held its 61st Ordinary General Assembly, during which a new Chamber Assembly was elected. In the





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new Chamber Assembly's first meeting, Turgay Deniz was re-elected as president.

On September 16, during a press conference held by the TCCC, Turgay Deniz argued that the cost-of-living adjustment contributes to rising costs for goods and services. "It's wrong to think that salary increases are the only ways to combat inflation and protect purchasing power. They are one of the reasons for price hikes", Deniz stated. The TRNC Parliament unanimously approved a law allowing public sector workers and pensioners to receive the cost-of-living allowance increase every four months (instead of every six months). "The mistake of this decision is becoming more evident each day", Deniz said. "A rise in public workers' salaries causes not only wage increases but also significant price hikes in the market." Deniz urged Parliament to reverse the decision and suggested that alternative measures, such as utilising the Price Stability Fund to reduce energy and fuel prices, could more effectively manage inflation (please see the Future of Work, Labour Relations and Trade Unions section for more on this).

Relations with Turkey

According to a statement from the Security Forces Command (GKK) Press Office, the Mediterranean Storm Exercise 2024 was conducted from September 16 to 19 with the participation of the TRNC and Turkey. The statement added that the exercise aimed to enhance mutual training, cooperation, and interoperability between the Cyprus Turkish Peace Forces Command (KTBK) and the Security Forces Command. The exercise involved land, air, and sea elements.

Domestic Developments

Ünal Üstel was re-elected as the leader of the ruling coalition's senior partner, the National Unity Party (UBP), during its 23rd Ordinary Congress on September 21. Out of approximately 20,000 members, around 10,100 participated in the vote, with

Üstel securing 6,555 votes. Hasan Taçoy received 3,284 votes, while Ahmet Melih Karavelioğlu garnered only 121 votes. Additionally, 176 ballots were deemed invalid. This was the first time that Üstel got elected in a multi-candidate congress.

The date for the congress of the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) has been announced. The 29th Ordinary General Congress, which has been moved six months ahead of its regular schedule, will take place on March 16, 2025. The move was made to avoid holding the congress in the lead-up to the presidential election, which will take place in October 2025.

On September 21, several parties and organisations issued a joint statement pointing out that over 600 seasonal workers, brought to Güzelyurt (Morphou) by a semi-public company (Cypfruvex) and various intermediary companies, had been subjected to severe rights violations and inhumane living conditions, indicating "evidence of human trafficking". "After these workers were brought to the island at a high personal cost, they were forced into unsanitary housing and subjected to physical and psychological abuse, threats, starvation, and the confiscation of their passports", the statement said. It also emphasised that ignoring human trafficking makes one complicit in the crime and highlighted broader violations, including the lack of access to basic needs such as healthcare, safe housing, and food. The statement called for an urgent resolution of these issues within the framework of humanitarian and legal obligations. The statement was issued by the Human Rights Platform and supported by among others the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP), Social Democratic Party (TDP), Revolutionary Workers Unions Federation (Dev-İs), Primary School Teachers' Trade Union (KTOS), Secondary Education Teachers' Union (KTOEOS), Medical Association, and the Bar Association.

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Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

On September 18, the third minimum wage of the year was determined, taking effect retroactively from September 1. The employers' representatives did not attend the meeting. After a 40-minute discussion, the new minimum wage was announced. Speaking to the press afterward, Minister of Labour and Social Security Sadık Gardiyanoğlu stated that with the consensus of the parties present (the government and employee representatives), it was decided to apply a 19.19% cost-of-living increase to the new minimum wage. The new rates were announced as 40,436 TL (€1,066) gross and 35,180 TL (€927) net per month. According to Cyprus Mail, this is higher than the minimum wage in the south, which is €1,000 gross and €885 net. As well as the south's, the north's new minimum wage is higher than that of Greece, Poland, Portugal, and Malta, among various other EU member states.

The Employers' Association chairperson, Hasan Sungur, who did not attend the commission's meeting, cited Article 4 of the Minimum Wage Determination Commission Law, stating that "no technical data regarding the development of the country's economy and/or the factors outlined in the law were presented to the Commission". He argued that this absence made it "impossible to make an objective economic assessment". Sungur also expressed concern that a higher minimum wage would "completely eliminate our competitive power". He noted that employers had repeatedly called for a sectoral minimum wage to reflect the different economic realities across various sectors. However, despite political promises, this system has never been implemented. In a written statement, Sungur further criticised the government's lack of action in introducing a lower minimum wage system for foreign nationals working in the country, which had been agreed upon but never enacted.

KTAMS, the trade union of public servants, announced that the hunger limit of a family of four is 27,402 TL (€727) as of 31 August 2024.





SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Yiannis Charalambous

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

Hubert Faustmann

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

Enis Porat

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Sertac Sonan

Prof. Dr. Sertac Sonan works in Political Science & International Relations Department at Cyprus International University. He is the Director of the Centre for Cyprus and Mediterranean Studies at the same university.

Stavros Stavrou

Stavros Stavrou holds a Bachelor's degree in History from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Warwick and a Master's in Industrial and Employment Relations from International Training Centre of the ILO in collaboration with University of Turin. His research focuses on the employment relations of migrants and refugees, trade unions, and social inequalities.





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