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anniversary

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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.

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### PODCASTS in NOVEMBER:

*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 DECEMBER:

*Hubert Faustmann, Yiannos Katsourides and Leandros Savvides*  
**ELAM's Political Evolution: Secular(ish) Pandemic Politics and Electoral Success**  
(in English)

### PUBLICATIONS in NOVEMBER:

*Yiannos Katsourides and Leandros Savvides*  
**ELAM's Political Evolution: Secular(ish) Pandemic Politics and Electoral Success**  
Report 2021



### PUBLICATIONS in DECEMBER:

*No publications in December*

### 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



### EVENTS in NOVEMBER:

*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus and Project Phoenix*  
**Panel Discussions on Migration and Inclusion in Cyprus and the EU**  
Monday, 29th November 2021  
7:30 PM – 9:30 PM (EEST)  
The Base by CyprusInno  
Link to the FB-Event  
<https://bit.ly/3ky8s9V>  
RSVP by mail at  
[tiziana@project-phoenix.eu](mailto:tiziana@project-phoenix.eu)

*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cyprus and enorasis*  
**Enorasis' 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Friendship Weekend**  
Friday, 19th November 2021, 9:30 AM –  
Sunday, 21st November 2021, 16:30 PM (EEST)  
Rodon Hotel, Agros

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## CYPRUS PROBLEM

As expected, no developments occurred in October with regards to the appointment of a new envoy by the UN Secretary General (“UNSG”) Antonio Guterres, following his meeting in New York with the respective Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders Nicos Anastasiades and Ersin Tatar, in late September.

The Greek Cypriot leadership is waiting for the appointment of a new envoy by the UN so that negotiations about the solution of the Cyprus problem can resume. The Turkish Cypriot<sup>1</sup> leadership, however, which insists on a two-state solution, has stated that they would not agree to a ‘special’ envoy whose mandate would be to move within the UN resolutions, meaning a federal solution. They want the UNSG to appoint instead a ‘personal’ envoy who will report directly to Guterres and bypass approval by the UN Security Council in order to find common ground.

The Cyprus News Agency meanwhile, citing diplomatic sources, reported that the Greek Cypriot leadership has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Colin Stewart, as the new Special Representative of the UNSG in Cyprus, to replace outgoing UNFICYP head and Special Representative in Cyprus, Elizabeth Spehar. The Turkish Cypriot President’s Special Representative, Ergun Olgun, confirmed that the Turkish Cypriot side also approved the appointment of Colin Stewart. Olgun pointed out that the UN Secretary-General had prepared a draft statement to be issued at the end of the trilateral meeting held in New York stating that the sides had agreed to the appointment of a ‘personal envoy’ but that the Greek Cypriot leader had rejected the release of such a statement. He also said that they had rejected two names that the UN had proposed earlier. Stewart previously served as the UNSG’s Special

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

Representative for Western Sahara and Head of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

On October 13, the Turkish Cypriot leadership began a new phase in the opening up of the fenced-off town of Varosha, clearing part of the area they have demilitarised for resettlement by Greek Cypriots who wish to reclaim their properties through the Immoveable Property Commission (IPC). According to reports from the north, one of the main roads within the zone, Anexartisias Avenue, was being cleared and barrels were being removed so that the street could be fully opened. CNA reported that barbed wire has been removed and bulldozers and trucks were carrying out road repairs along the avenue that once showcased well-known Greek Cypriot shops and businesses. The partial opening up of the fenced off town in Famagusta began a year ago on October 8, 2020. An announcement earlier this year claimed that 3.5% of Varosha, around five square kilometres, would be demilitarised and opened for settlement on a pilot basis which is the area now being worked on. Tatar has called on Greek Cypriots to apply to the IPC for return to Varosha under Turkish Cypriot administration, or seek compensation or exchange of property. The move is supported by Turkey. The partial opening of Varosha was condemned by the Greek Cypriot government, the EU, UN and several countries with calls on Turkey to reverse the action which is defiance of UN Security Council resolutions.

On October 18, EU foreign ministers met in Luxembourg where the ongoing difficulties stemming from sour ties between Cyprus, Greece and Turkey were discussed, with special mention made on Varosha. Local media reported that the European External

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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Action (EEA) Service is set to draw up a list of options which the EU can take over a lack of progress being made on the bloc's relationship with Turkey. Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, reiterated that it was decided in July 2021, that if no progress was made on Turkey's part, then the council would ask for such a list.

On October 18, Anastasiades met with UK High Commissioner, Stephen Lillie and the Director for Cyprus Affairs at the UK Foreign Office, Ajay Sharma. During the meeting, Anastasiades briefed the two officials on his meeting in September with Tatar and the UNSG.

On October 21, Anastasiades sent a letter to Guterres reporting Turkey's latest "unilateral and illegal actions" in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the fenced area of Varosha, but also calling for the immediate appointment of a special envoy to give a push to the resumption of negotiations of the Cyprus problem. Anastasiades also briefed EU leaders of state and government about the above matters during a European Council Summit held in Brussels on October 21 and 22.

In an interview with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper, published on October 25, Tatar said he was against the reunification of Cyprus because the Turkish minority would be assimilated by the Greek majority. Tatar also said Turkey would never withdraw from the island. He also refuted claims that he was Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan's puppet and reiterated his position for a two-state solution.

In a joint communiqué, issued on October 27 by the Embassy of Slovakia which facilitates meetings between parties from both sides, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot parties stated that the environmentally sensitive Karpas peninsula should not be used for military purposes and expressed concern over the stalemate in the Cyprus problem. The representatives said "that the Karpas peninsula, just as all other ecologically sensitive areas of Cyprus, should

remain to be used for purely environmental and cultural purposes and not as military areas." It recently emerged that the Turkish military planned to create a naval base on the peninsula, after it was 'granted' by Tatar 145 square kilometres of Greek Cypriot land in the area of Cape Apostolos Andreas. The parties also expressed concern over recent statements and actions that undermined the reunification prospects.

Greek Cypriot director Panikos Chrysanthou and Turkish Cypriot poet Nese Yasin on October 15 received the European Citizen's Prize 2021 for their cooperation which led to documentaries 'Our Wall' and 'My Homeland'. The award ceremony was held at the Home for Cooperation in the buffer zone in Nicosia. This prize is an award for exceptional achievements projects promoting better mutual understanding and closer integration between citizens of the Member States or facilitating cross-border or transnational cooperation within the European Union.

## HYDROCARBONS

On October 3, the Office of the Turkish Cypriot President issued a statement pointing out that the Turkish Cypriot's rights over the energy resources around the island was not limited to sharing revenues to be generated but also management of these resources and reminded the Greek Cypriot leadership that their proposal dated 13 July 2019 was still on the table. "This proposal was designed on the basis of a win-win philosophy and will allow the co-management of the island's resources through a joint decision-making mechanism," it said.

On October 4, a Maltese-flagged survey vessel, Nautical Geo was harassed and sent away by two Turkish warships while it was carrying out surveys inside Cyprus' EEZ, under the excuse it was violating the Turkish continental shelf. Turkish Minister for National Defence Hulusi Akar described the survey conducted by the vessel as provocative and said that

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Turkey would never allow the NauticalGeo research vessel to violate Turkey's continental shelf. The vessel was surveying the area between Cyprus and the Greek island of Crete for the EastMed pipeline project, an EU project of common interest in the field of energy.

On October 8, Turkey announced that it planned to carry out seismic surveys in the eastern Mediterranean until December 16, 2021. According to a navigational warning, Turkish research vessel Oruc Reis, accompanied by Ataman and Cengizhan, will be carrying out seismic surveys of the area between Antalya and Cyprus.

On October 19, following the 9th Trilateral Summit held in Athens, Cyprus, Greece and Egypt signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to connect their respective electricity grids. Nicosia and Athens had also signed preliminary deals with Egyptian authorities to link their power systems to Egypt's via a subsea cable. The interconnector will transmit power produced by renewables in North Africa to Europe. The EuroAfrica Interconnector is a high-voltage direct current interconnector and submarine power cable between the Greek, Cypriot, and Egypt power grids through the Greek island of Crete. Dubbed an 'energy highway' bridging Africa and Europe, it will have a capacity to transmit 2,000 megawatts of electricity in either direction. The project is said to be an important component of the development strategy of the Eastern Mediterranean Energy Corridor, providing an alternative source of energy supply from the region to the European Union and vice versa.

On October 19, the Turkish Foreign Ministry slammed the signing of the tripartite MoU. 'Maximalist and illegal claims by Greece and the Greek Cypriot administration which overlook the presence of Turkish Cypriots are behind the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean' Turkey's Foreign Ministry said.

On October 21, the Turkish Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Tanju Bilgic said that Turkey would

respond in kind if the Greek Cypriot administration resumed drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Pointing out that the Greek-Greek Cypriot sides were taking steps aimed at escalating tension in the Eastern Mediterranean by sending survey vessels to areas that fell within Turkey's continental shelf, he said that such provocative activities would not go unanswered.

## GREEK CYPRIOTS

## Economic Developments

On October 15, the government presented its new strategy for attracting businesses to Cyprus with emphasis, among others, on high technology, shipping, innovation, and research and development, in a bid to turn the island into a business and trade centre in the wider region and Europe. The strategy includes 12 targeted actions in five pillars that considers the best practices employed by other European countries. The incentives included in the strategy concern over residence and employment, taxation, simplification and digitisation of procedures, as well as promoting Cyprus as an attractive investment destination. The scheme will come into force in January 2022. Eligible for inclusion in the scheme are foreign entities operating in Cyprus or those planning to operate, that have offices housed independently of other businesses and not in private homes. Cypriot shipping, high tech, and pharmaceutical companies are also eligible.

The International Monetary Fund revised upwards the growth rate of the Cypriot economy, compared to its forecasts from last April. According to the World Economic Outlook (WEO) published on October 12, the growth rate of the Cypriot economy for 2021 will be 4.8% compared to a recession of 5.1% recorded in 2020. The growth rate was projected at 3% in last April's WEO. Growth for 2022 is projected at 3.6%, compared to 3.9% projected in April. According to the IMF, unemployment is projected to

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fall from 7.6% in 2020 to 7.5% in 2021, to be further reduced to 6.9% in 2022, a forecast that remains unchanged since April. The inflation forecast is also revised upwards, as the IMF estimates that in 2021 it will rise to 1.7% from -1.1% in the previous year and will be 1% in 2022. In its spring forecast, the IMF predicted that inflation would reach 0.5% in 2021 and 0.8% in 2022. The current account deficit is also projected to increase and according to the IMF will reach 9.3% from 11.9% of GDP in 2020 and will fall to 7.4% in 2022. According to the projections of last April, the current account deficit was estimated at 8.5% of GDP in 2021 to decline to 6.1% in 2022. Based on the forecasts of Cyprus' Ministry of Finance included in 2022 budget, the growth rate is expected to reach 4% in 2022 compared to an estimated growth of 5.5% in 2021.

A dramatic rise in the cost of grain as a result of weather conditions and the Covid-19 pandemic, has caused various breakdowns in the global food supply chains, including transportation, fuel costs, rising inflation and other disruptions. Data released by the Statistical Service showed that in September, under the category of 'housing, water supply, electricity and gas', prices rose 14%, transport by 11.5%, and food and non-alcoholic beverages 1.47%. Overall inflation was also up in September.

The government of Egypt has confirmed the double tax treaty with the Republic of Cyprus. The confirmation came through Egyptian president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi who ratified the agreement. The double tax treaty between the two countries was first signed in October of 2018 and was subsequently approved by the Egyptian parliament in July of 2020. The agreement was officially announced in Cyprus' official government gazette on October 24, while it has also been reported in Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram. Double tax treaties aim to avoid international double taxation while at the same time helping to combat tax evasion.

According to the Cyprus Statistical Service (CyStat), Cyprus' trade deficit rose to €3.1m for the period be-

tween January and July 2021, marking an increase of 23.3% year-on-year. The total imports of goods (from EU member states and from third countries) during the same period came up to €4.8m compared with €4.3m during the corresponding date range in 2020. The total exports of goods dropped by 6.3% for the period between January and July 2021 (to EU Member States and to third countries), with the figure being €1.6m compared to €1.7m in the same period of 2020. The European Union was the main source of supply of goods to Cyprus with a share of €3.1m, representing 66% of total imports, while imports from all other European countries totalled €363.6m between January and July 2021. Imports from the rest of the world came up to €1.2m.

The latest data from Eurostat has revealed that 17.6% of Cypriots in 2020 were at risk of poverty and social exclusion, below the EU average of 21.9%. Cyprus fared worse for those aged 65 and above, with 22.5% at risk of poverty while in the EU this stood at 20.4%.

#### Domestic Developments

In October, the COVID19 cases increased from 120,272 to 124,444. The number of deaths attributed to the virus increased from 552 to 574. An uptick in positive infections occurred in the last two weeks of the month following a steady decline. The Delta Plus variant has been detected in Cyprus according to the health ministry. While investigations into Delta Plus are still at the early stages, current estimates by international experts put it at being about 10% more transmissible than the original Delta variant, while the leap from Alpha to Delta was about a 50 to 60% increase.

The Bar Association is investigating two law firms included in the so-called Pandora Papers which exposed the offshore financial dealings of many leaders worldwide who allegedly stashed assets in covert companies and trusts. The two Cypriot firms named in the papers are the one founded by President Nicos Anastasiades, which still bears his name, and the

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other, Demetris Demetriades, owned by the father of former transport minister Marios Demetriades. Anastasiades has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing after the law firm he founded was accused of hiding the assets of a former Russian senator behind fake beneficial owners in a secret report filed with financial regulators in the British Virgin Islands (“BVI”). The report naming the Anastasiades law firm in connection with the BVI was published by the Guardian, a media partner of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists – the entity that secured the raw data comprising the Pandora Papers. A resolution by the European Parliament on October 19 called for an in-depth investigation by member states into politicians whose names appear in the Pandora Papers, with the draft specifically mentioning Anastasiades and other present and former political leaders. Socio-political ‘start-up New Wave – The Other Cyprus, together with progressive political movement, Volt Europa, called on Anastasiades to resign for reasons firstly of integrity and secondly to waive his presidential immunity to facilitate the work of the European Commission and the European Public Prosecutor’s Office. Opposition AKEL and the Greens also asked for Anastasiades to resign and to immediately declare presidential elections. DISY refused to admit any wrongdoing and rushed to defend the President while the government sought to downplay the explicit naming of Anastasiades in the papers and accused AKEL of cheap politicking.

On October 24, EDEK leader Marinos Sizopoulos chastised the socialist party’s members who refused to attend an extraordinary congress held in Nicosia accusing them of trying to undermine Edek’s prospects. The congress was held amidst reactions that the party ignored a court injunction barring it from holding an electoral congress planned and elections for the party leadership. The injunction had been sought by a group of 15 persons intending to stand as candidates for the party’s new central committee. Sizopoulos, who is running for another term, had announced they would be holding an extraordi-

nary congress instead, arguing that EDEK’s articles of association allow the party leader to do so. The dissidents, that call themselves the Initiative Group for EDEK’s Salvation and Reorganisation, did not attend the event. Among those absent from the congress were former EDEK leader Yiannakis Omirou. A court ruling on October 29 paved the way for the party to hold an electoral congress overturning the prior court’s injunction.

#### Labour Relations and Trade Unions

At the beginning of the month, the staff of the English School went on strike for a week. In a statement, the English School Staff Organization stated that “we went on strike following the unjust, arbitrary and illegal decision of the Director and the Board of Directors of the English School to initiate disciplinary inquiry and to suspend the elected President of our Trade Union”. The reason for the labor crisis in the English School, was, according to the board of teachers, the refusal of the management to accept a series of demands of the employees. Due to this, the teachers considered it right to inform the students’ parents to be aware in case any dynamic measures would be taken. According to the management of the school, the president of the teachers had sent a message to all the parents of the students, using their personal data managed by the school. Eventually, on October 8, the strike measures ended after the acceptance of a mediation proposal submitted by the deputy director of the labor relations department of the Ministry of Labor to the direction and organization of the teachers of the school. The mediation proposal envisages lifting of the strike measures, revocation of the disciplinary procedure and lifting of the suspension of the president of the branch of the Trade Union.

On October 19, the Minister of Justice and Public Order together with the Chief of Police met with a delegation of the Independent Union of Civil Servants of Cyprus (ASDYK) and its Police Branch to discuss problems that concern police officers and

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firefighters. Among others, they concern the salary upgrade of low-paid police officers and firefighters, the request for salary upgrade of the Special Constables, from scales A1-A2-A5 to scales A2-A5-A7, the reduction of the retirement threshold, as well as the issue of the serious delay in repaying overtime work. On October 25, the General Council of PEO met and decided to organize a mobilization against the rise of living costs in all cities on Saturday November 11. According to a relevant announcement, in recent months, workers, vulnerable groups, retirees, and Cypriot consumers in general are experiencing a spree of continuous price increases of basic consumer goods. It is pointed out that this situation makes the position of workers even more difficult, given the repercussions of the economic crisis of 2013, the declining incomes as a result of the pandemic. PEO demands full restoration of the indexation allowance (ATA) as a mechanism for restoring the purchase value of wages, reduction of VAT on electricity and other basic necessities, increase in welfare benefits to compensate for the increased cost of living, utilization of the mechanism of imposing a maximum price on basic items and reopening of the Cereals Committee by the state to create the necessary strategic stocks of cereals.

Two labor issues remain active in the ports of Limassol and Larnaca which are in the mediation process, one before the Minister of Labor Zeta Emilianidou and the other before the Department of Labor Relations. The first labor dispute concerns the controversy that has erupted since last March between the SEK and PEO trade unions on the one side, and DP World Limassol, one of the port's management companies, on the other. The second labor dispute concerns the non-renewal of the collective agreement for dock workers, which expired in December 2020. On October 31, the voluntary exit plan set by the management of the Cypriot Company for the Management of Assets (KEDIPEs) expired. The plan provided the opportunity to 100-130 (out of 360) employees to voluntarily leave the organization with a

compensation of up to €180,000. However, due to the limited number of employees who declared their willingness, the administration authorized the management to start discussions with the trade unions, in order to initiate procedures for possible redundancies due to surplus.

## TURKISH CYPRIOTS

## Economic Developments

On October 20, long queues were seen at petrol stations across the TRNC, when the news spread that the two suppliers of fuel stopped their distribution to the petrol stations on the grounds that they suffered loss due to devaluation of Turkish Lira as well as increasing oil prices in international markets. Reportedly, the demand of the suppliers to raise the price was turned down by the government, which regulates the fuel prices. The distribution has resumed the following day after a deal was struck between the distributors and the government. The price of fuel (98 Octane) went up on October 28 by 12%. This was the second price hike in one month. Overall, in October, the price of fuel has increased by almost 20%.

The Tourism Planning Department announced that the 9-month average occupancy rate of touristic accommodation facilities reached the peak of the last two years with 24.2% in September. In the same period of 2020, the average occupancy rate was recorded as 20.2%. The occupancy rate in September alone was 34.3%, while the occupancy rate in September 2020 was only 5.4%. The highest rate recorded in the last two years was in August 2021 when the occupancy rate reached 34.3%. The number of arrivals (of non-TRNC citizens) has also increased by 767.1% in September compared to the same month of the previous year thanks to the resumption of face-to-face teaching at the universities. While 11,727 people had arrived in September 2020, this figure reached 101,684 in the same month of this year.

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According to the TRNC Central Bank data, depositors prefer to keep their money in foreign currency accounts. Data for August 2021 show that 33.2% of the deposits held in banks were held in Turkish Lira and remaining 66.8% in foreign currency accounts. The statistics also showed that deposits, as of August 2021, increased by 11.4% compared to the end of 2020 and by 16.2% compared to August 2020.

The economy portal, Standard Cyprus, reported based on the Ministry of Finance data, that the 9-month budget deficit of the TRNC reached 810.7 million TL (€78.6 million). It turns out that the amount of aid and loans transferred from Turkey was far from the figures originally envisaged in the budget increasing the deficit. As of the end of September, the loans provided by Turkey to support public finances remained at 319.1 million TL though figure was envisaged to be 862.5 million TL. The realization rate in defense (362 million TL; 48% realization rate), and investment (137.5 million; 23% realization rate) also fell short of envisaged figures. The realisation rate measures the gap between what was promised and what was actually paid.

#### Relations with Turkey

On October 10, after Mustafa Akinci's communication consultant Ali Bizden and researcher Dr Ahmet Cavit An, Ali Kismir, a journalist and head of Basin-Sen (Press Workers Trade Union) was denied entry to Turkey and was deported.

The Turkish embassy did not invite representatives of the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) and Social Democratic Party (TDP) as well as the former presidents, Mustafa Akinci and Mehmet Ali Talat, to the October 29 reception to mark the anniversary of the founding of Turkish Republic. The two parties boycotted the speech given by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the Turkish Cypriot parliament during his visit in July.

#### Domestic Developments

On October 13, the Prime Minister and leader of the National Unity Party (UBP), Ersan Saner resigned citing problems in reaching a quorum in parliament, internal problems within the junior coalition partners, the Democratic Party (DP) and Rebirth Party (YDP) and other problems in the government. The minority coalition government had received a vote of confidence on 19 December 2020 with the support of 3 independents who had resigned from the People's Party (HP) during the government formation process. Tatar asked Saner to remain in office until a new government was formed. Tatar also said that he would be waiting for the outcome of the UBP General Congress set to take place on 30-31 October, before he gives the mandate to form the government. The UBP has the biggest group in the parliament.

On October 19, only days before the UBP congress, the country was shocked by a video circulated via social media. The video appears to show Prime Minister Saner engaging in online sex with a woman. Saner claimed that video was 'edited' and a part of a 'character assassination' carried out against him with the support of 'underworld/criminal organizations'. Later in the week, Saner said that he had filed a complaint with the police to shed light on those involved in the conspiracy to frame him and said 'this video was deliberately served ahead of the party congress'. The police detained the woman in the video and two men who helped her to retrieve the video after it was deleted. One day later, the former private secretary of Faiz Sucuoglu (Nicosia MP), the front-runner of the leadership election at the UBP, was detained too, turning the case into a political drama. Sucuoglu said he was shocked when one of the suspects in the scandal video case claimed he had given the video to Sucuoglu months ago. 'This is a scam. Let alone withdrawing from the race I will leave the country if they can prove these allegations,' Sucuoglu said in his defence. On October 26, Saner

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announced his withdrawal from the leadership election. He pointed the finger of blame at his rival Sucuoglu and called on the party members not to vote for those who try to win the leadership with conspiracies. Sucuoglu said in response that the creation of those images was Saner's fault and reiterated he was not involved in the video's dissemination. Hasan Tacoy (Nicosia MP), another candidate for the party's leadership said he respected Saner's decision and would be visiting him to ask for his support. Eventually, Sucuoglu emerged victorious from the congress, receiving 5,296 of the 8,726 votes cast. His rivals Hasan Tacoy received 2,869 and Zorlu Tore 468 votes. The party had 16,484 members eligible to vote.

Tatar is expected to hand over the task of forming a new government to Sucuoglu on November 1. It is most likely that Sucuoglu will head an interim government until early general election to be held in the first month of 2022.

In October, the number of Covid-19 cases increased from 19,544 to 22,614 while the number of deaths attributed to the virus increased from 78 to 88.

Issuing a written statement on October 24, the Minister of Health said that the booster jabs were available for those 18-year-old and over who had received two jabs of Sinovac at least six months ago. He also called on everyone above 12 to complete their vaccinations. According to the Minister, the number of people who received at least one dose of vaccine was 275,198, while the number of people who received two doses of vaccine was 258,639 (67.71%). The number of people who received their third dose was 46,179.

The Nicosia Turkish Municipality's (LTB) "side-by-side against violence" project has revealed the alarming rate of violence against women in the Turkish Cypriot community. The survey results showed that 40% of the women suffer physical violence and 60% from psychological violence. The survey also revealed that one in every four women suffer from sexual violence and one in four women from economic

violence. Ayse Kismir, the public information officer for the project, stressed the need for introducing a gender-equality curriculum in schools and pointed out that it is only possible to overcome the problem of violence against women through education.

### Labour Relations and Trade Unions

The depreciation of TL continued in October reducing the purchasing power of the salaried and particularly the minimum wage earners. The minimum wage in euro terms went down from €419 at the end of September to €393 at the end of October.

In a statement issued by the Union of Turkish Cypriot Public Servants (KTAMS), Guven Bengihan, the chairperson, pointed out that the minimum wage was below the poverty line, and argued that the minimum wage was literally melting because of the price hikes in the marketplace as well as against the increasing value of the foreign currencies. Once again, KTAMS called for a legal amendment, which will include the minimum wage in the law that envisages cost-of-living increments to the public sector employees once every six months.

On October 5, KTAMS staged a protest outside the Ministry of Interior building against what it said was the government's arbitrary citizenship policy. 'Turkish Cypriots are faced with the risk of becoming a minority in their own country as a result of the government's action to handout citizenships like candy,' Secretary General of KTAMS, Serman Yigit said during the protest.

On October 27, Cyprus Turkish Public Officials Trade Union (Kamu-Sen), issued a written statement to protest the price hikes for bottled gas and fuel, arguing that the government dragged the country into a chaotic environment.

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