



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!

Newsletter No.
157
November and December

We wish you a successful and inspiring year 2026.
Thank you for your continued interest and for reading the FES Newsletter.

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HEADLINES

Erhürman and Christodoulides hold a joint meeting with UNSG personal envoy and issue communique with reference to a Cyprus problem solution in line with UN resolutions.

Cyprus prepares to assume EU Council rotating Presidency, effective from January 2026.

Christodoulides makes six changes to his cabinet in the second major reshuffle of his term, including replacing the Energy Minister.

Entrenched stereotypes and conscious or unconscious bias continue to influence education, career choices, and daily life in Cyprus, according to new data from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

Cyprus approves National Minimum Wage increase, effective from January 2026.

Turkish Cypriot leader Tufan Erhürman made his first official visit to Turkey, where he met with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

At the Republican Turkish Party's (CTP) extraordinary congress, Sila Usar İncirli was elected as the party's leader.





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PODCASTS in DECEMBER and JANUARY:
No podcasts in December and January

EVENTS in DECEMBER:
No events in December and January



EVENTS in JANUARY:
No events in December and January

PUBLICATIONS in DECEMBER:
No publications in December so far



PUBLICATIONS in JANUARY:
No publications in January so far





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CYPRUS PROBLEM & INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

On November 20, the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders, Tufan Erhürman and Nikos Christodoulides, held their first meeting, which was facilitated by UN Special Representative Khassim Diagne. Both leaders agreed on several steps aimed at cautiously reviving the peace process, which included:

- a joint meeting being held with the UN Secretary General's (UNSG) personal envoy, Maria Angela Holguin in December;
- the resumption of preparatory talks between the negotiators and technical teams;
- Holguin undertaking shuttle diplomacy and visiting Greece and Turkey; and
- the involvement of European Commission's Special Envoy for Cyprus Johannes Hahn.

Both leaders raised issues of concern, but the shared goal remained restarting substantive talks from where they left off at Crans-Montana in 2017, within the agreed framework. The recently elected Erhürman, therefore, clearly shifted from the positions of his predecessor, Ersin Tartar, who had abandoned the internationally accepted framework of a bizonal, bicomunal federation during his term in office with the support of Türkiye. Erhürman presented a ten-point package of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) aimed at creating a positive climate ahead of negotiations. They included granting citizenship to children of mixed marriages, issuing driving licenses in the south to Turkish nationals married to Turkish Cypriots, and expanding the Ayios Dhometios/Metehan crossing with contractors from both communities. He also proposed opening a direct communication channel between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot police. Other measures included allowing under-14 athletes to participate in friendly matches, easing bureaucratic obstacles for traders under the Green Line Regulation, advancing the halloumi

agreement with Bureau Veritas, and reactivating the ad hoc committee on EU alignment.

On November 28, the Greek Cypriot negotiator, Menelaos Menelaou, and Mehmet Dana, the Turkish Cypriot representative, met at Ledra Palace to advance technical groundwork ahead of Holguin's visit. Holguin arrived in Cyprus on December 4 and held separate meetings, on December 5 with Erhürman and on December 6 with Christodoulides, to prepare the ground for a tripartite meeting between the two Cypriot leaders and herself. Ongoing issues at crossing points were raised by Erhürman during his meeting with Holguin.

On December 11, Christodoulides and Erhürman reunited in the presence of Holguin at the UN mission premises after a joint visit to the Committee on Missing Persons. In a positive and friendly atmosphere, the leaders agreed that the end goal is a federal solution with political equality per UN Security Council resolutions. The leaders also reviewed ongoing CBMs and endorsed new ones including prioritising the opening of new crossing points, finalising the Halloumi Protection Designation of Origin (PDO) trade arrangements by end of January 2026, constructing pipelines from the Mia Milia/Haspolat Water Treatment Plant, and upgrading infrastructure and increasing staff at border crossings. Both leaders committed to continue meeting regularly and to prepare for an eventual informal 5+1 conference, including the guarantor powers (Greece, Turkey, UK) and the UN, when conditions are ripe. In a press conference following the meeting, Erhürman referred to his four-point methodological framework to guide talks: the Greek Cypriot side to accept political equality; time-limit negotiations; preservation of all past agreements; and the UN to provide assurances that if talks fail due to the Greek Cypriot, the Turkish Cypriots will not remain under isolating embargoes. Erhürman stated that comprehensive negotiations cannot begin until all four of his points are fully met.

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On December 11, Christodoulides met with Hahn, and both agreed that “now is the time” for results to be achieved. Hahn also met with Erhürman on December 12, where they discussed the Schengen process, EU citizenship rights for children of mixed marriages, direct contact with EU institutions, the ad hoc EU committee on alignment, rules on direct trade, the EU-supported GSI project, halloumi registration, and solar energy initiatives in the buffer zone. The meeting followed a joint visit by Erhürman and Christodoulides to the CMP anthropological laboratory. Meanwhile Hahn stated that the European Union will facilitate a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem but will not act as a mediator between the parties.

As part of her mission to prepare the ground for the third enlarged meeting on the Cyprus problem, Holguin travelled to Athens on December 12 to meet both Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis. On December 18, Holguin was received by Turkish Foreign Minister, Hakan Fidan, in Ankara. According to diplomatic sources cited by Turkish news agency ANKA, Fidan underlined Turkey’s support for the UN-led process on the Cyprus problem, while reiterating that a two-state solution remains, in Ankara’s view, the most realistic approach.

A second trilateral meeting between the Cypriot leaders and Holguin is planned for late January 2026. The third enlarged meeting is reportedly being considered for February 2026, with the possible participation of the UNSG.

¹The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is only recognised by the Republic of Turkey. While Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots considered Ersin Tatar president until 19 October when Tufan Erhürman was elected president of the TRNC, the international community considers them the communal leader of the Turkish Cypriots. As the government of the Republic of Cyprus remains interna-

On December 30, Greek Cypriot farmers were harassed and physically threatened by the Turkish army and police in the buffer zone village of Mammari while they were reportedly working in their field, located about 300 metres from a Turkish outpost. According to the foreign ministry of the TRNC,¹ the farmers allegedly attempted to cultivate land in the north without permission. Christodoulides condemned the incident, and the government made representations to the UN, whose Peacekeepers reportedly remained observers throughout the incident. UNFICYP spokesman Aleem Siddique stated that the UN will investigate in order to prevent further tensions in the area.

HYDROCARBONS

On November 7, a 3+1 meeting of the Energy Ministers of Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and the United States was held. Discussions during the meeting were focused on the US’s interest to replace Russian gas with natural gas coming from other sources, such as American LNG and the Eastern Mediterranean region.

On November 26, Cyprus and Lebanon signed an agreement on the delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) between the two countries and agreed to explore the idea of a Cyprus-Lebanon electricity interconnection by creating technical teams and conducting a viability study. Christodoulides described the agreement as “a milestone of strategic importance” ending 20 years of talks on the issue.

tionally 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 December 19, a gap analysis was carried out by the project manager for the Vasiliko natural gas terminal focusing on identifying deficiencies that need to be addressed.

On December 23, a trilateral meeting in Jerusalem was held between Christodoulides and the prime ministers of Greece and Israel, Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Benjamin Netanyahu, respectively. The three announced their commitment to the continuation of further joint projects spanning from natural gas development to electricity interconnections, including the Great Sea Interconnector (GSI). The three leaders reportedly would like to resolve the management of natural gas fields by the end of January 2026. Regarding the GSI, they may decide to begin from the Cyprus-Israel part, which is smaller and will cost less.

GREEK CYPRIOTS

Gender Developments

According to the latest report from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Cyprus ranks last among EU member states in the Gender Equality Index, at just 47.6 out of 100 points. Although Cyprus is improving in terms of gender equality over time, it is still performing below the EU average, with scores showing an increasing disparity in recent years. Despite steady progress on gender equality, entrenched stereotypes and conscious or unconscious bias continue to influence education, career choices, and daily life in Cyprus. While Cyprus records the highest female labour participation rate in the EU (86.3%) and the highest share of women aged 30–34 completing tertiary education (73%), this is not reflected in corresponding employment sectors. Nearly half of jobs (49.4%) remain segregated into male- and female-dominated occupations. EIGE indicators also show a significant gender gap in personal time linked to unpaid care and domestic

work (54.7). Cyprus's overall gender equality score improved in 2025 but the country ranks 27th in the EU. The report identified that Cypriot women have the highest rate of health consequences following physical or sexual violence in the EU, at 76%, compared to an EU average of 57%. Meanwhile, 36% of women in Cyprus have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15, ranking the island 5% higher than the EU average. The report identified progress and gaps relating to gender equality in seven key areas: violence, health, power, time, knowledge, money and work.

Gender Equality Commissioner Josie Christodoulou stated on December 23 that approximately 40 of the 60 actions have been completed or are in progress within the framework of the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2024-2026.

Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

On November 12, during a joint summit held in Athens, the governments of Cyprus and Greece agreed to update the economic and technical parameters of the GSI project linking the electricity grids of Cyprus, Greece, and Israel. According to Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the move, which is effectively a new cost-benefit analysis, would allow the project to be strengthened with the entry of new investors. This would reportedly soothe the rift between the Cypriot and Greek governments, which has been reportedly going on for months over the Cypriot government's initial agreement to make five annual payments of €25m to Greece's independent transmission system operator Admie for the project. However, the Cypriot government has thus far withheld the funds, citing a lack of tangible progress on the project and differences in opinion regarding how the money should be sourced. Meanwhile, EU energy commissioner, Dan Jorgensen, stated that no new study is required, stressing that the interconnector is a project of strategic priority for Brussels and that the project's benefits outweigh its costs.

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While addressing a conference on the matter of hydrogen on November 14, Energy Minister George Papanastasiou stated that the government aims for Cyprus to have a hydrogen production business ecosystem by the end of 2027 to bolster the island's energy production. According to Papanastasiou, Cyprus is participating in the European Network of Network Operators for Hydrogen (Ennoh), which aims to organise the EU's hydrogen transmission networks.

According to Eurostat, Cyprus continued to increase its share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption, highlighting steady progress on the island's energy transition, as the EU struggles overall to meet its longer-term climate targets. Cyprus recorded a renewable energy share of 21.9% in 2024, continuing a clear upward trend that has been sustained for nearly a decade. In 2015, renewable sources accounted for 9.9% of Cyprus's gross final energy consumption, reflecting a relatively low starting point. In 2022, Cyprus reached 19.4%, before rising to 20.3% in 2023.

Domestic Developments

On December 5, Christodoulides announced six changes to his cabinet in the second major reshuffle of his term so far:

- Michael Damianos, who had served as Health Minister since January last year, was moved to the Energy Ministry, replacing Giorgos Papanastasiou.
- Neophytos Charalambides replaced Damianos as Health Minister.
- Konstantinos Fytiris was appointed Justice Minister, replacing Marios Hartsiotis, who was demoted to the role of Commissioner of the Presidency.
- Dipa MP Marinos Mousiouttas was appointed Labour Minister, replacing Yiannis Panayiotou.

- Clea Hadjistefanou-Papaellina was appointed as Social Welfare Deputy Minister, replacing Marilena Evangelou.

Cyprus Presidency of the EU Council

Effective from January 1, 2026, Cyprus will assume the sixth month Presidency of the EU Council. Under the motto "An Autonomous Union – Open to the World", Cyprus's Presidency programme outlines five interconnected pillars:

- Cyprus will focus on autonomy through security and defence, autonomy through competitiveness, openness to the world, shared values, and budget negotiations for the EU's next financial framework.
- On security and defence, Cyprus will support major defence initiatives and promote rapid implementation of the White Paper on European Defence and the Roadmap for Defence Preparedness by 2030. The Presidency identified strengthening transatlantic relations and Euro-NATO cooperation as cornerstones of European security.
- Cyprus will also prioritise freedom of navigation and security in maritime corridors, implementing the EU Maritime Safety Strategy.
- The Presidency identified migration management as a central security issue and will promote as a key priority the full implementation of the Pact on Immigration and Asylum and the strengthening of the return system.
- On competitiveness, Cyprus will promote administrative simplification, enhance energy security through alternative supply routes and affordable prices, and strengthen digital sovereignty to reduce external dependencies.

Regarding enlargement and neighbourhood relations, Cyprus has committed to advancing the EU enlargement agenda, with Ukraine identified as a key priority. The Presidency will continue to promote

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diplomatic, political, economic, military, energy, and humanitarian support for Ukraine. The Presidency will also work to strengthen EU relations with the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood and the Gulf countries, and to promote cooperation through the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. It will reportedly deepen ties with the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States. The Presidency's logo, featuring 27 threads, representing EU member states, was inspired by traditional Lefkara embroidery.

Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

On November 4, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that the EU directive aiming to establish an adequate minimum wage in all 27 member states is valid, after Denmark's appeal. The Court annulled two of the directive's provisions that argued that they "amount to direct interference by EU law in the determination of pay". More specifically, one of the provisions set out criteria over how the adequate minimum wage should be set and the other sought to prevent the decrease of the statutory minimum wage in countries where they are automatically indexed, such as Cyprus.

On November 5, negotiations over the cost-of-living allowance (COLA) system have once again reached an impasse, after employer organisations rejected the government's draft proposal for a permanent agreement. Trade unions unanimously accepted the government's draft framework, following a nationwide union meeting. Union leaders stressed that the proposal was accepted without amendments and praised the government's role in facilitating dialogue. Employer organisations Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB) and Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), however, deemed the draft unacceptable in key areas. They objected primarily to a last-minute provision

allowing the Ministers of Finance and Labour to extend COLA coverage to additional beneficiaries, a measure they say was never previously discussed. Despite rejecting the proposal, employers confirmed they remain committed to negotiations and dialogue.

On November 6, Cyprus's Parliament voted a bill introducing teleworking in the public sector. Employers' organisations warn that the new law creates unequal obligations between public and private employers. OEB argued that, while private-sector employers face strict legal duties on health, safety, and teleworking costs under the 2023 law, the proposed public-sector legislation focuses mainly on procedures and does not impose equivalent responsibilities on the state. OEB also argued that this "two-speed" approach violates the principle of equal treatment, as teleworking risks are the same regardless of sector.

On November 13, the government, employers' organisations and trade unions reached a landmark preliminary agreement on COLA, ending 15 years of uncertainty over the scheme. The preliminary permanent agreement provides for the gradual restoration of COLA to 100% by July 2027. COLA will rise to 80% in January 2026, 90% in July 2026, and reach full implementation in July 2027, after which it will be paid annually at 100%. A key feature of the agreement is the extension of ATA coverage to around 55,000 low-paid workers through its linkage to the national minimum wage. The framework also includes safeguards tied to economic growth, a 4% inflation cap, and mechanisms to mitigate macro-economic risks.

On November 13, The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) dismissed five applications filed against the Republic of Cyprus by 450 public sector employees and pensioners over salary and pension cuts imposed during the financial crisis. The appli-





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cants challenged austerity measures introduced in 2011–2012, claiming violations of property rights, the right to a fair trial, and protection against discrimination. The ECHR ruled that the pay and pension reductions were lawful, served the public interest during a severe economic crisis, were temporary and proportionate, and struck a fair balance between public interest and individual rights. The Court also rejected claims of unequal treatment between public and private sector workers, finding that public employees, whose remuneration is funded by the state budget, were not in a comparable position to private sector workers.

Also, On November 13, The Secondary Education Teachers' Union (OELMEK) announced a work stoppage on Wednesday, 19 November 2025 coinciding with the first parliamentary discussion of the Ministry of Education's regulations on teacher evaluation. OELMEK held a protest outside the House of Representatives and warned that further or escalated action may follow, depending on developments.

On November 28, The Ministry of Labour announced that it is pushing pension reform aimed at raising the minimum pension to more adequate levels. According to the Minister, the minimum basic pension for 2025 is €435.62, the full basic pension is €512.50, and it is expected to reach €550 in 2026. The reform follows International Labour Organisation's (ILO) recommendations, with pensions split into a basic component (linked to years of service) and a proportional component (linked to contributions). According to ILO studies, the minimum first-pillar pension could reach €745, providing more adequate support for retirees.

On December 12, police trade unions expressed strong opposition to the decision to reduce annual days off work from 19 to 5 by next January. The unions highlighted the importance of adequate rest for maintaining operational readiness, warning that any

unilateral attempt to weaken the institution will not be accepted.

On December 15, the Cyprus Shipping Chamber, together with the trade unions Cyprus Workers' Confederation (SEK) and Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO), signed the renewed Cypriot Collective Agreement for seafarers employed on vessels flying the Cypriot flag. The agreement was also co-signed by OEB. The renewed collective agreement will be valid for three years, from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2028, and aligns with international collective bargaining frameworks and recognised labour standards. Key updates include adjustments to wage scales and compensation levels for loss of life or disability, reflecting the recently agreed ILO minimum wage for Able Seafarers.

On December 22, Parliament approved the new tax framework. The reform reshapes the taxation of individuals, companies, shareholders, and real estate transactions, while significantly strengthening tax administration and enforcement. Beyond rate adjustments, it introduces structural changes to how income is taxed, profits are distributed, property is treated, and compliance obligations are enforced. Most measures will take effect from 1 January 2026. On December 24, a new collective agreement was signed between the Cyprus Bankers Employers Association and bank employees' union ETYK, marking the return of a sector-wide collective agreement after years of fragmented, bank-level arrangements. The agreement covers ETYK members employed by banks belonging to the employers' association, and it is the outcome of lengthy negotiations that began in 2023. It is described by both sides as mutually acceptable and beneficial, reinforcing collective bargaining as the foundation of stable labour relations in the banking sector. The contract spans the period from 2023 to the end of 2027.

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On 23 December 2025, the Council of Ministers approved an increase of the National Minimum Wage to €1,088 per month for employees with at least six months of continuous service, effective 1 January 2026. For workers with less than six months of service, the wage rises to €979. Around 50,000 employees are expected to benefit. Trade unions described the increase as disappointing, noting that the agreed automatic COLA was not applied, and employers criticised the increase as disproportionate and economically unfounded, arguing it could harm business viability and trigger inflationary pressures.

TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Gender Developments

In a press statement on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Republican Turkish Party (CTP) Women's Organisation Chair and Member of Parliament Doğuş Derya criticised the Turkish Cypriot government for failing to establish a women's shelter and violence prevention centres, describing this absence as "a cause for shame". She also highlighted ongoing problems faced by women, including the recent death of a woman under suspicious circumstances, economic hardship disproportionately affecting women, and gender-based discrimination in the workplace. Derya argued that women, as taxpayers, are entitled to effective public services and protection, rather than mere rhetoric.

According to data shared by Turkish Cypriot Police Chief Ali Adalier, on November 25, authorities recorded 1,024 cases of violence against women in 2024 and 957 cases to date in 2025.

On December 5, Mehmetçik/Galati-Büyükkonuk/Komi Kebir Mayor Fatma Çimen Tuğlu attended the International Summit on Women in Local Government, held in Istanbul. She is the first female mayor

elected in the northern part of Cyprus in the past 36 years. During the summit, Tuğlu took part in discussions on strengthening women's cooperatives and leadership training for women in local government.

Economic Developments in Times of Green Transition

On November 1, Turkish Cypriot Deputy Prime Minister and Tourism Minister Fikri Ataoğlu stated that in the first nine months of 2025, visitor arrivals to the north continued to rise, reaching 1,887,840 in total, with more than 1.6 million visitors arriving from Turkey. He added that arrivals from Turkey increased by about 22.2% compared with the same January–September period last year, helping sustain the Turkish Cypriot tourism industry as other international markets remained weaker.

On December 12, the Turkish Cypriot Public Audit Office released a report on the Ercan/Tymbou Airport operating agreement, revealing that, under Supplementary Contract No.5, the state took on €59 million in additional liabilities without clear legal authority or public benefit. The report highlighted issues with budget oversight, revenue recording, and uncollected revenue; noted the absence of comprehensive audits since 2018; and recommended referring the findings to the Attorney General.

On December 19, the 2026 public budget was approved by Turkish Cypriot Parliament with a majority vote after ten days of debate. The budget for 2026 totals 190,634,850,000 Turkish lira (€3.77 billion) and was adopted with 28 votes in favour and two against. Following the vote, Prime Minister Ünal Üstel thanked lawmakers and officials for completing the budget process and stated that the new budget prioritises the completion of unfinished projects, and investments in infrastructure, health, and education.

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According to a report by Haber Kibris news website published on December 31, the Turkish Cypriot administration is experiencing a serious fiscal imbalance, with the general budget deficit, including advances, exceeding 7.85 billion TL (around €155.5 million) in the first 11 months of 2025. That is a 56.6% increase compared with the same period in 2024 and the highest eleven-month deficit on record. The local budget deficit rose even more sharply, surpassing 7.32 billion TL (about €145.0 million), up 217% year-on-year, pointing to mounting pressure on public finances. From January to November, general budget revenues totaled 99.12 billion TL (€1.96 billion) while expenditures reached a record 105.39 billion TL (€2.09 billion), confirming a persistent gap between income and spending. November alone saw general revenues of 10.8 billion TL (€214 million) against expenditures of 11.7 billion TL (€232 million). Overall, the figures indicate record deficits driven by expenditure growth outpacing revenues, raising concerns over the sustainability of the Turkish Cypriot public finances.

According to the Statistical Institute's Consumer Price Index data, monthly inflation stood at 0.81% in November 2025 and 3.39% in December 2025. As a result, annual inflation reached 39.45% for the period from January to December 2025. Over the last six months, the cost of living increased by 21.66%. The six-month inflation rate of 21.66% will be used as the basis for adjusting wages for public sector employees and pensioners. In December, the main price increases were recorded in the categories of restaurants and hotels, clothing and footwear, and communication.

Relations with Turkey

There is nothing to report for November and December.

Domestic Developments

On November 4, Chinyere Olivia Ojoagu, a nine-year-old girl, died after being taken to hospital twice in Gazimağusa/Famagusta. It was reported that she was first brought to Famagusta State Hospital, treated briefly, and discharged at her father's request. The next morning, she was taken to the hospital again and then transferred by ambulance to the Nicosia State Hospital Pediatric Emergency Department, where she died around noon. The incident has raised questions about the quality of public health service and prompted public outcry, including criticism from several non-governmental organisations.

On November 6, the Nicosia Criminal Court handed down prison sentences in the high-profile "fake diploma" case linked to the Cyprus Health and Social Sciences University in Güzelyurt/Morphou, sentencing Serdal Gündüz, the university's former secretary-general, to 15 years in prison, and Amir Shakerifard, the former manager of the university's international office, to six years for helping to issue fraudulent diplomas.

On November 13, Turkish Cypriot leader Tufan Erhürman paid his first official visit to Turkey, meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. At a joint press conference, Erhürman stated, "We are one of two equal founding partners in Cyprus; we will negotiate not for the sake of negotiation, but for the sake of a solution." Erdoğan claimed that the most realistic solution is a two-state model.

On November 15, Turkey's Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz visited the northern part of Cyprus to mark the 42nd anniversary of the TRNC's unilateral declaration of independence, declaring that Ankara remains committed to supporting the Turkish Cypriots' security, sovereignty, economic development, and efforts toward international recognition.





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On November 25, the Turkish Cypriot Ministry of Interior intensified nationwide inspections to combat illegal residence and unlawful employment, carrying out extensive checks, particularly around İskele/Trikomo, where traffic police, immigration officers and staff, and district officials stopped vehicles to verify identities and residence status. Authorities stated that the operations, also conducted in Kyrenia, Güzelyurt/Morphou, and Lefke/Lefka, aimed to maintain public order and safety, emphasising that there will be no tolerance for illegal residence or work.

At the extraordinary congress of the Republican Turkish Party (CTP), held on November 30, Sila Usar İncirli was elected party leader after competing against Erkut Şahali and Asım Akansoy. İncirli secured 1,284 votes, representing 52.6% of the total. The position of CTP chair had become vacant following the election of Tufan Erhürman as Turkish Cypriot leader on October 19. During this period, the party's secretary-general, Erkut Şahali, served as acting chair until the congress. A medical doctor by training, Sila Usar İncirli is the daughter of former CTP Secretary-General Naci Talat Usar and has served as a Member of Parliament for Nicosia. She was first elected to parliament in the 2018 general election and was re-elected in 2022.

On December 18, the CTP Party Council convened to elect a new secretary-general following Erkut Şahali's resignation at the request of the newly elected party leader, İncirli. Mehmet Kale Kişi won the vote with 38 out of 75 votes, defeating Muhittin Tolga Özsağlam.

On December 9, severe flooding occurred in some locations across the northern part of Cyprus following heavy rainfall, submerging some homes and roads and causing streams to overflow, landslides, and road closures. Civil defence teams evacuated residents in parts of Kyrenia and North Nicosia, res-

cued animals, and emergency services worked intensively throughout the day.

On December 14, the Turkish Cypriot Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources announced emergency measures after suspected foot-and-mouth disease symptoms were detected in approximately 70-80 cattle at a farm in Boğaziçi/Lapathos in the İskele/Trikomo district. Samples were sent to the Turkish Foot-and-Mouth Disease Institute for testing, and a technical committee of veterinary experts was established to coordinate the response. Authorities implemented movement controls in livestock areas and prepared to vaccinate animals, securing 200,000 vaccine doses from Turkey. Following confirmation of the cases, additional measures were introduced across the north to further restrict the movement of livestock and contain the outbreak.

According to the Standard Eurobarometer 104 national report for Cyprus, published on December 19, the survey of the Turkish Cypriot community carried out in October-November 2025 found that 84% of respondents were satisfied with their lives, slightly below the EU average, and 73% felt that things in their society were moving in the right direction, a notable shift from the previous year. The top issues identified were health care (35%), rising prices and inflation (33%), and the Cyprus problem (31%). A clear majority (57%) viewed the full application of EU legislation in the Turkish Cypriot community as positive, and overall trust in the EU increased to 59%, while 58% expressed satisfaction with how democracy works locally. The survey also assessed media trust and perceptions of important EU challenges, with migration and the war in Ukraine seen as key concerns.

On December 25, Turkish Cypriot leader Tufan Erhürman called for the appointments to the Board of Trustees of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) to be made swiftly and in full compliance with

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the law, emphasising that the university's founding statute clearly defines the procedures for appointing and dismissing board members. Erhürman made the statement to explain his decision to reject approval of the list of appointments submitted by the Council of Ministers to replace the existing members of the university's board of trustees.

Future of Work, Labour Relations & Trade Unions

On November 2, it was reported that a workplace accident in Haspolat/Mia Milia near Nicosia claimed the life of 46-year-old worker Yusuf Niyazov, who died in hospital despite medical efforts. Two men have been arrested on suspicion of causing death by negligence, and the investigation into the incident is ongoing.

On November 11, the Cyprus Turkish Secondary Education Teachers' Union (KTOEÖS) staged a nationwide strike in protest against what it described as unlawful investigations and pressure by the Ministry of Education targeting 34 union representatives. Striking teachers gathered at the union headquarters and marched to the Education Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office. KTOEÖS President Selma Eylem said teachers would not bow to threats, accused the government of undermining democratic rights and worsening conditions in education, and pledged to continue defending constitutional and legal rights and a secular, democratic education system.

On December 4, 2025, the Constitutional Court in the northern part of Cyprus indefinitely postponed the verdict in the trial of journalist and Press Workers' Union (Basın-Sen) President Ali Kışmır, who faces up to 10 years in prison over a social media post, after hearing submissions from the prosecution.

On December 30, the Cyprus Turkish Public Servants' Union (KTAMS) continued its strike into a second day at the State Printing House after start-

ing action on December 29, citing unresolved long-standing issues including alleged mobbing, discrimination, excessive pressure on staff, unlawful employment of a retired worker, unfilled positions, and problems with overtime and transfers. KTAMS President Güven Bengihan said the strike would run from 08:00 to 15:30 and could extend further if the government does not open a dialogue to address the union's concerns.

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FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

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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 Political Science 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.

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.

Özker Kocadal

Dr. Özker Kocadal is an Assistant Professor of International Relations at Cyprus International University. He earned his Ph.D. in Politics from the University of Exeter, where his research explored the role of kin-states in peacemaking, focusing on Bosnia, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland. His expertise lies in intra- and interstate conflict, international peacemaking and peacebuilding, and the complex geopolitical relationships among Cyprus, Turkey, and the United States. Dr. Kocadal has published widely in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes, contributing to academic debates on power-sharing, peace processes, and international relations. In addition to his scholarly work, he is an active commentator on global affairs and a contributor to opinion platforms.





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Layout:
Stadtformat Einig & Kazmierczak GbR

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