



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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126
NOVEMBER 22

The FES-Newsletter
Team wishes all our
readers a
Merry Christmas
and a wonderful year
2023!

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FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

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PODCASTS in DECEMBER:
No podcasts in December



PODCASTS in JANUARY:
No podcasts in January

PUBLICATIONS in DECEMBER:
No publications in December



PUBLICATIONS in JANUARY:
No publications in January

EVENTS in DECEMBER:
No events in December



EVENTS in JANUARY:
No events in January

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CYPRUS PROBLEM AND BICOMMUNAL RELATIONS

On November 11, Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, announced via Twitter that during the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) summit, which was held in Uzbekistan between November 10 and 11, the TRNC¹ was accepted as a member state with an observer status². The move was condemned in the south but was praised in the north of the island. Both the US State Department and the European Commission condemned the development. However, on November 13, Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov, stated there had been no question of recognizing the TRNC as an independent state during the OTS Summit.

On November 16, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and Americas, Miroslav Jenca, arrived in Cyprus as part of the UN Secretary-General's effort to create the right climate to restart the negotiations of the Cyprus problem. Upon his arrival, the UN official met with Greek Cypriot negotiator Menelaos Menelaou and Turkish Cypriot special representative, Ergun Olgun. On November 17, Jenca met separately with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, Nicos Anastasiades and Ersin Tatar, respectively. The UN official stated that the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, will remain committed to being involved in the process of finding common ground to restart Cyprus negotiations.

On November 18, China's ambassador, Liu Yantao, stated that a request by the Turkish Cypriot side to

conclude a "status of the forces agreement" (SOFA) with UNFICYP had been rejected by the UN Secretariat. Liu also clarified that the OTS member states did not agree that the TRNC could join the organization and that no country or region was admitted to the organization either as an observer or a member.

Following a meeting with President Anastasiades in Berlin on November 23, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, stated that he was in favour of a solution to the Cyprus problem based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation. He added that Germany would do whatever possible to have the Cyprus problem negotiations restart based on international law. Anastasiades was in Berlin as part of a two-day official visit, in an effort to create the conditions for the resumption negotiations on the Cyprus problem reportedly seeking support by the EU.

In the beginning of the month, the Turkish Cypriot leadership decided to halt the participation of Turkish Cypriot schools in the bi-communal 'Imagine' programme which is implemented by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) under the auspices of the Bi-communal Technical Committee on Education, on the grounds that it is not in line with the new Turkish Cypriot position regarding the solution of the Cyprus problem. The president Ersin Tatar's special representative Ergun Olgun said that "the problem is related to the work of the bi-communal technical committees." Olgun added that the other problem they had was that the Republic of Cyprus finances part of the project. Later in the month, the Turkish Cypriot Minister of

suspended in northern Cyprus pending a political settlement to the Cyprus problem (see Protocol no. 10 of the Accession Treaty).

²Observer status is defined as "a privilege granted by some organisations to non-members to give them an ability to participate in the organisation's activities". The Organization of Turkic States consists of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

¹The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is only recognised by the Republic of Turkey. While for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, Ersin Tatar serves as President of the TRNC, the international community considers him the communal leader of the Turkish Cypriots. As the government of the Republic of Cyprus remains internationally recognised as the government of the whole of the island, the entire island is now considered to be a member of the European Union. However, the *acquis communautaire* is





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Education Nazim Cavusoglu stated that the project was “not cancelled but suspended”. ‘Imagine’ is an Educational Programme on Anti-racism Education/ Education for a Culture of Peace launched in October 2017, after many months of efforts and with the agreement of the leaders of the two communities on the island. The project is supported by the German Embassy in Cyprus. As per 2022, 6,117 students, accompanied by 714 teachers were trained in the Imagine Project. Another 518 teachers were trained in Peace Education both mono-communally and bi-communally and another 92 head teachers participated in the ‘Imagine’ Head Teachers conference.

On November 24, CNA reported that Anastasiades and Tatar are expected to meet in December, during an UN-organized reception marking the end of the year. The last time the two leaders met was in April 2022, during an event organized by UNFICYP. Meanwhile, Menelaou and Olgun held a meeting in the aftermath of Jenca’s visit. During the meeting, the two said that Jenca’s visit was a positive development, indicating the continued interest of the UN for the Cyprus problem. They also recapped matters discussed at technical committees.

Speaking to news channel Al Jazeera, Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides stated on November 28 that the Greek Cypriot side remains faithful to the reunification of the country and that a solution to the Cyprus problem could represent a win-win situation for all stakeholders, adding that the possibility of it happening is still high, provided there is political will.

In an interview with Deutsche Welle’s (DW) Turkish service, asked to comment on the heightening of tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as by the US’ growing support for Greece and Greek Cypriot side, the Turkish Cypriot Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tahsin Ertugruloğlu said “that tension is rising slightly in the Eastern Mediterranean but it is not surprising ... any move that ignores the Turkish Cyp-

riots and the Motherland Türkiye and aims to usurp the interests of Türkiye and the Turkish Cypriots will not be allowed. ... While steps are taken to threaten our security, we will continue to do whatever needs to be done together with guarantor country Türkiye. Drones are already known; they are deployed at the Gecitkale/Lefkoniko airport. I have stated before; I think a naval base should be established.”

On November 29, Turkish Defence Minister, Hulusi Akar, stated that a solution to the Cyprus problem cannot be found after half a century of negotiations. “It is not a matter of founding the state, but a recognition of the state which has already been founded,” Akar noted. Similarly, an annual report published by the Turkish Foreign Ministry on November 22 also stated that a bizonal, bicomunal federation will not form the basis of a solution for the Cyprus problem.

On November 21, Presidential candidate Achilleas Demetriades shared his vision for a “One and Green” island. Demetriades among other proposed for the formulation of policies that would unify environmental issues of Cyprus as a single ecosystem, and the creation of a bicomunal technical committee on climate change under the European Civil Protection Mechanism RescEU.

On November 29, Sir Stelios Hadjioannou, the founder of the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation, announced the opening of the applications for the 2023 bicomunal business awards. The Stelios Bicomunal Business Cooperation Awards 2023 will offer a cash prize of €10k to each entrepreneur-member of the 10 winning, two-member teams, with the total prize money amounting to €200k. The 2023 awards will be the 13th time they are held in Cyprus, after being held for the first time in 2009. To date, the total value of the bi-communal cooperation awards amounts to approximately €4.2m. Applications for the Stelios Bi-Communal Business Awards 2023 can be submitted until January 27. Interested groups

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can apply on the foundations' website and download the application form.

HYDROCARBONS

Addressing the 10th Energy Symposium 'Cyprus: Energy Hub in the Eastern Mediterranean', on November 17, President Anastasiades stated that Cyprus has no objections to Turkey being part of the wide network of energy cooperation that has developed, but they would have to stop their illegal actions, denying the existence of Cyprus' and Greece's exclusive economic zones (EEZs), or the law of the seas and sovereignty of the states in the area. Cyprus would continue with its energy policies, despite any provocation or threat from Turkey, Anastasiades noted.

In an interview published on November 27 in the Sunday edition of the German newspaper Die Welt, Anastasiades stated that Cyprus could supply the European Union with natural gas much earlier, if Brussels strengthened its support for the development of the supply infrastructure. Anastasiades pointed out that there are huge deposits of natural gas off the coast of Cyprus, adding that the country could contribute to the effort to make the EU independent from Russian energy supplies.

GREEK CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

Bank of Cyprus reported a €9m net loss for the first nine months of 2022, largely due to the voluntary staff exit plan and its respective one-off cost of €101m recorded in the third quarter. The bank announced that its non-performing exposures (NPE) ratio fell to 4.5% of the total loan portfolio, while it showed a significant increase in interest income due to the increase in interest rates by the European Central Bank. Hellenic Bank also released its finan-

cial results for the first nine months of 2022, posting a profit of €76.4m, compared to a profit of €21m in the corresponding period of 2021, reflecting a rise of 263% year-on-year.

On November 25, the Cyprus Fiscal Council stated that it expects increased pressures on the macro economy for 2023, with forecasts slightly more unfavourable than those of the Ministry of Finance, in its report for 2022. Based on the council's favorable scenario for 2023, it expects a GDP growth of 2.4%, compared to the 3% expected by the Ministry of Finance. The council explained that growth is forecast to slow down, mainly due to external factors, for the next 18 months, mainly in the construction and non-tradable services sectors, despite all the significant increases in economic activity, which managed to hold down employment in the first quarter of 2022. The council also noted that inflation has reduced household disposable incomes but boosted spending, particularly in retail. For 2023, according to the council, inflation is expected to be limited to 3.8%, compared to the estimates of the Ministry of Finance, which are at 3%.

On November 25, Anastasiades referred the amended foreclosure law back to parliament, after lawmakers on November 10 passed the law to suspend the sale of mortgaged property until January 31, 2023. The "Transfer and Mortgage of Real Estate (Amendment) (No. 4) Law of 2022" law reinstates the moratorium on mortgage foreclosures until January 31, 2023, due to the ongoing and intensifying economic and social impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the war in Ukraine. The proposed suspension concerns the debtor's main residence, the estimated value of which does not exceed €350k, the debtor's business premises with an annual turnover not exceeding €750k and the debtor's plot of land, the estimated value of which does not exceed €100k. The President argued that failure to implement an effective divestment framework will lead the banking

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system to a policy of stricter lending. Anastasiades warned that the aforementioned consequences may also affect the state budget, due to the fact that the direct impact on the financial system brings adverse consequences to the state's policy.

According to a report released on November 30 by the Cyprus Statistical Service (Cystat) Cyprus' tourism revenue rose by €80m in September 2022, reflecting an increase of 30% compared to the same month of 2021. In addition, tourism revenue during the first nine months of 2022 increased by 88% year-on-year, reflecting a rise of €920.2m. Tourism revenue continues to edge closer to pre-pandemic levels, with the revenue generated in the first nine months of 2022 coming at €268.6m. Tourism revenue between January and September 2020, the first year of the pandemic, reached €298.9 m.

Domestic Developments

In November, the Covid 19-cases increased from 599.118 to 614.237 cases³. The number of deaths attributed to the virus since March 2020 rose from 1194 to 1226.

On November 7, Archbishop Chrysostomos II, aged 81, passed away following a four-year battle with cancer. Elections for the new archbishop will take place on December 18. Elections are direct with people voting in their registered parish. Eligible to vote will be individuals over 18 that are registered Christian Orthodox individuals who have resided in Cyprus for more than a year. According to the process, the top three clergymen garnering the most votes become official candidates for the throne, who will be elected by the Holy Synod comprised by sixteen members.

A group of MEPs by the European parliament's PEGA committee visited Cyprus in order to inves-

tigate the involvement of Cyprus in the production and distribution of the Pegasus and other software that may be used for illegal surveillance. The committee alleged that Cyprus had become a centre for the export of surveillance software. The Pega committee report said that the island appears to have a robust legal framework for the protection of personal data and privacy, for the authorization of surveillance, and for exports. It concluded however that rules are easy to circumvent and there are close ties between politics, the security agencies and the surveillance industry.

On November 18, during a meeting at the extended electoral office of DISY, Anastasiades stated that the government's work in the past ten years can only be continued with the election of presidential candidate, Averof Neophytou. The DISY leader claimed last month that the President was not be fully supporting him in the coming elections, resulting in a meeting of the two to clear the air.

On November 21 Pavlos Kontidis took the title of European champion at Laser for the second time in his distinguished career. It is Kontidis' second win this year in Hyeres, having won the World Cup held there in April, which is considered the most important.

Daily Politis published an article alleging a secret deal between DIKO and presidential candidate, Nicos Christodoulides purporting to set the conditions for the party's election partnership with the candidate. The DIKO memo dates to April 2022 and reportedly included a commitment binding Christodoulides not to set up his own party in the event of failure to make it to the runoff ballot or win the elections. Elsewhere the alleged memo states that, should Christodoulides fail to win the presidency, he could subsequently stand as a mayoral candidate

³The government no longer publishes daily Coronavirus cases or deaths. Instead, it publishes figures on cases and

deaths on a weekly basis. These figures represent the latest published figures of the month, up until September 30.

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on the DIKO ballot. Christodoulides' political adversaries, in particular ruling party DISY, pressed the candidate as well as DIKO to come clean about the alleged agreement. DIKO denied the existence of such a memo, accusing Politis of 'tabloid journalism' while DIKO leader Nicolas Papadopoulos called it "fake news". The election campaign team of presidential candidate Nikos Christodoulides opted for total radio silence. Christodoulides is running as an independent, and has gathered the backing of the DIKO, EDEK and DIPA parties. The former foreign minister consistently leads in opinions polls. In the latest survey published earlier this month, he garnered 30.5%, trailed by DISY leader Averof Neophytou at 20.5% and AKEL candidate Andreas Mavroyiannis at 17.5%.

On November 29, Anastasiades said that the government, and the president cannot remain indifferent on claims of corruption, with the anti-corruption authority set to investigate allegations made in books by former presidential adviser Makarios Droushiotis. The author said in three recently published volumes that corruption was rife across all levels of government. Government Spokesman Marios Pelekanos said Anastasiades had called on Transparency Commissioner, Harris Poyiadjis, who heads the anti-corruption authority, to investigate claims made in the books *The Gang* (I Simmoria), *Crimes at Crans Montana* (Egklima sto Kran Montana), and *The Mafia State* (Kratos Mafia). Droushiotis' claims surfaced after a meeting between Presidential candidate Andreas Mavroyiannis and Poyiadjis. Mavroyiannis called for everything in the latest book, *Kratos Mafia* to be investigated. Poyiadjis said that the anti-corruption authority had also received 20 complaints that they will be investigating, including a large box file submitted by an anonymous female journalist containing citations of various laws that had been violated.

On November 30, Anastasiades received the credentials of five new ambassadors to the island, namely Spain, Oman, Sweden, Switzerland and Kuwait, briefing them on the current situation in Cyprus. The new ambassadors are Sweden's Martin Hagstrom, Switzerland's Christoph Burgener, Oman's Mohamed Abdallah Awad Al-Nahdy, Kuwait's Abdullah Musaed Alkharafi and Spain's Gabriel Ferrán Carrión.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On November 1, the staff briefings and the voting of EAC trade union members were completed. According to an announcement, the members have authorized the competent bodies to take measures on the following issues:

1. Immediate staffing of the EAC and resolution of all related issues concerning its orderly operation, the safety of its personnel and facilities, the maintenance of its viability and the exercise of its role and mission for the public interest, for the benefit of Society and consumers.
2. Violations of collective agreements and any alteration of employment terms and regulations. Immediate resolution of all labour related issues.

On November 17 and 23, dozens of members of the trade unions of the EAC staged a one-hour strike.

On November 7, the Cyprus Association of Intern Doctors (SEIDIK) decided to go on strike indefinitely in case their violated rights regarding working hours and overtime pay are not guaranteed. As they explain, based on the current legislation they request the establishment of a maximum number of on-call hours of 4 per month (or 6 on-call hours per month with the concurring written opinion of the specialist doctor in the corresponding clinic/department), as well as establishing the maximum number of holidays at 2 per month. They also request the estab-

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ishment of mandatory leave after the end of 24-hour duty (for active duty) and accordingly in case of calls after midnight for on-call duty. They also request the granting of a day off after 24-hour duty on a Saturday, Sunday or other holiday. With regard to overtime pay, they note that they are asking for the pay of interns to be equalized with the newly appointed specialist doctors, while emphasizing that the amount of €3 they are currently paid for their hourly overtime work, including work in on-call and evening clinics, is humiliating. After the intervention of the Minister of Health, they decided to suspend the strike measures they had announced.

On November 8, the port of Larnaca was paralyzed and serious incidents were threatened due to the refusal of the company, Kition Ocean Holdings Ltd, which took over the management of the port, to adopt the agreement concluded by the Ministry of Transport for the port of Limassol regarding the employment of dock workers. However, on November 10, the port workers and mark keepers of the port of Larnaca decided to suspend their strike measures, after the intervention of the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance. According to the announcement, Mr. Kousios headed a mediation meeting in his office with the leaderships of the competent federations for the port workers of SEK, PEO and the management of Kition Ocean Holdings Ltd. The unions accused the management company of insisting on not implementing the agreement, in relation to the loading and unloading contracted for the port of Limassol at the Ministry of Transport in March 2017. The agreement requires any ship in port with cargo to be insured as per the regulations. The procedure provides for the release of the ship for loading and unloading purposes. Based on the provisions of the relevant law, cargo unloading is provided as a job to port workers and mark keepers. This practice has been in effect only for the 50% of unloadings, since 2017 in the port of Limassol, which is the result of an agreement between the Ministry of Transport

and the managing company, DP World and the trade unions. The remaining 50%, based on the agreement, can be allocated by the company wherever it chooses. The trade unions demand the adoption and implementation of this agreement in the port of Larnaca as well.

On November 11, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, Kyriacos Kousios, said he will begin contacts with the social partners next week to explore the ground over a possible agreement on the Cost-of-living adjustment (CoLA). He has set a timeframe over an agreement between the social partners (trade unions and employers associations) on a possible restoration of the Cost-of-Living Allowance (CoLA) by the coming Christmas. Trade unions demand the restoration of CoLA, that is a salary indexation according to inflation, while employers say that CoLA should be abolished altogether. Cyprus froze CoLA during the financial crisis while a 2017 transitional agreement providing that CoLA would be provided once a year provided the economy shows growth in the second and third quarters of the previous year. Under the agreement the CoLA indexation would be incorporated into basic salaries and consists of 50% of the annual increase in the Consumer Price Index. The agreement was also extended until the end of 2021. Before the 2013 crisis CoLA was calculated every six months.

TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 114.35% higher in November 2022, compared to November 2021. The consumer prices had risen by 2.48% in November alone while the inflation rate in the first eleven months of the year reached 86.14%.

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The Turkish Cypriot weekly Cyprus Today reported that as of the end of October, annual food inflation stood at 130.75%; some of the biggest price hikes have been among basic food products. The price of bread has increased by 146.36% while the price of milk rose by 177.11%. The price of local cheese (hellim/halloumi) went up by 165.82%. The cost of meat also rose by 128.14% in the last 12 months ago. According to Cyprus Today the government estimates a shortfall of 3.05 billion TL (€153 million) in its budget for 2023. The Finance Minister Alisan San stated that the government spending is forecast to be 35.85 billion TL (€1.82 billion) while revenues will be only 32.8 billion TL (€1.67). San noted that Turkey's contribution to the 2023 budget will be 8 billion TL (€406.6), including 3.4 billion TL (€172.8) for "grants and investments", 2.1 billion TL (€106.7) for defense expenditures, and 2.5 billion TL (€127) in loans. He said that the government will try to plug the projected gap in public finances with "income-generating regulations," such as passing new laws regulating the foreign exchange market, crypto currencies and "virtual" betting. "We will try to increase the country's income by putting these [regulations] into practice," he said. "Most importantly, we need to address the underground economy [using]... information technology more," San added.

Relations with Turkey

On November 9, the Turkish Vice President, Fuat Oktay, visited the construction site of the controversial "kulliye" [complex] which will house the TRNC's new Presidential palace and Parliament in Nicosia. Oktay targeted those who oppose the project by saying, "let me be clear, those who try to hinder the construction process will find the TRNC and the Turkish state in front of them." In a statement, the main opposition party CTP retorted: "We declare that we say no to the "Kulliye" project, which was put forward against the will of the Turkish Cypriot people, and we would like to share with the public that those who try to ignore the will of the Turkish Cyp-

riot people will find the CTP in front of them." A few days after the visit, on November 12, a protest march against the construction took place. The demonstration was organised by the "No to the Kulliye Platform", a group formed of some opposition political parties, trade unions and environmentalists. The platform is against the project as it is "unauthorised, illegal and unconstitutional" and because the money spent on the complex could have been used on other projects such as schools and hospitals. The project is entirely financed by Turkey.

On November 16, the Turkish Cypriot daily Havadis' Editor-in-Chief, Basaran Duzgun, was denied entry to Turkey. Duzgun was treated as an inadmissible passenger in Turkey on the grounds of "national security" and sent back to Cyprus. Since the summer of 2021, eight Turkish Cypriot citizens, including the former Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci's communications advisor Ali Bizden, researcher Ahmet Cavit An, journalist Ali Kismir, former MP Okan Dagli, Left Movement Secretary General Abdullah Korkmazhan and most recently in September, deputy Secretary General of the Path to Independence (Bagımsızlık Yolu), a small political party, Munur Rahvancioglu, have been denied entry to Turkey and sent back to Cyprus on the same grounds.

On November 28, the new Turkish Ambassador to Nicosia Metin Feyzioglu presented his letter of credence to Ersin Tatar. Speaking during the ceremony, Feyzioglu touched upon the speech delivered by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the United Nations General Assembly, and called on the whole world to recognize the TRNC. Noting that with the determined and strong leadership of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the skillful diplomacy carried out by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, the TRNC entered the Organization of Turkic States with an observer status with the status of a sovereign and independent state, Feyzioglu said that this membership is a big step towards recognition.

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The Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Yasin Ekrem Serim announced that the Republic of Türkiye will begin offering consular services in Famagusta as of January 15 next year.

Goods imported from Turkey to the TRNC will be priced in Turkish lira rather than foreign currencies, according to an amendment to the legal framework regulating Turkish exports. The rule change was announced in late November and will come into effect on December 5, following years of lobbying from successive TRNC governments and business leaders. The decision was hailed by the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, which said in a statement that the move will help tackle inflation.

Domestic Developments

On November 21, Famagusta MP Aysegul Baybars and Kyrenia MP Jale Refik-Rogers announced their resignation from the People's Party (HP). A joint statement from Baybars and Refik-Rogers said: "The People's Party, which set out claiming to make radical change and present a new politics to society, has drifted away from its founding principles over time". The statement said that in addition to the two MPs, former Nicosia MP Gulsah Sanver Manavoglu and 64 HP members including former members of the central executive board, had also handed in their resignations to the party headquarters. The split within the HP emerged in May, when Baybars and Refik-Rogers refused to abide by the HP party assembly's decision to withdraw from the Parliament. On May 26, the HP Chairperson Kudret Ozersay announced his resignation from the parliament citing the "illegitimate UBP-DP-YDP government", which was established against the will of the people and democracy, as the main reason for his withdrawal from the parliament. A statement issued by the HP following the announcement of the resignations, said that the resignations were long overdue as both Baybars and Refik-Rogers should have handed them in the day they refused to comply with the party's decision to withdraw from the parliament.

The TRNC has entered another electoral cycle, with candidates launching their campaigns for local elections that will take place on December 25. The elections for mayors, councilors and other local officials take place every four years.

Turkish Cypriot businessman Asil Nadir has sold his media company (Kibris newspaper and TV) to a Turkish company. In a comment on the sale, the editor-in-chief of the Turkish Cypriot daily Yeniduzen, Cenk Mutluyakali said Turkish businessmen "close to the AKP took over the Kibris Media Group, as an extension of the policies of political, social, and cultural engineering and integration [with Turkey]".

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

Fears have been raised that state schools could turn into a "breeding ground" for disease due to an ongoing strike by school cleaners. More than 200 cleaners who have become members of the Kamu-Is trade union have been on strike since September. The cleaners, who are employed by a private company which was outsourced by the Ministry of Education to provide cleaning services, claim they have not been paid and that their rights as workers are being violated. The insufficient cleaning services at public primary and secondary schools have led to scenes of overflowing bins and dirty classrooms and toilets. The Cyprus Turkish Medical Association (KTTB) called for the Health Ministry, National Education Ministry and municipalities to take action to ensure that minimum hygiene conditions at schools are being met.

The Federation of Free Trade Unions (Hur-Is) announced that it has made an official application to the Ministry of Labor to call for a meeting of the Minimum Wage Determination Commission. Hur-Is President, Ahmet Serdaroglu, called on the Minister of Labor and Social Security, Hasan Tacoy, to take the necessary action. However, no meeting was held during the month of November.

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Meanwhile, the Cyprus Turkish Civil Servants Trade Union (KTAMS) chairperson, Guven Bengihan once again called on the government to increase minimum wage at the same rate as the rise in the cost of living. The minimum wage was last increased in July, however, the increase of around 41% was below the official 56.76% rise in the cost of living recorded in the first six months of 2022. Bengihan said in a written statement that according to the Statistical Institute's official figures, inflation was 24.88% in the last four months (July, August, September and October) alone. This means the purchasing power of the minimum wage earners has declined drastically.





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