



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.
127
DECEMBER 22





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

CONTENT

EVENTS, PODCASTS, PUBLICATIONS 3

CYPRUS PROBLEM
AND BICOMMUNAL RELATIONS 4

HYDROCARBONS 6

GREEK CYPRIOTS 6

Economic Developments
Domestic Developments
Labour Relations and Trade Unions

TURKISH CYPRIOTS 9

Economic Developments
Relations with Turkey
Domestic Developments
Labour Relations and Trade Unions

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online

2





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

PODCASTS in JANUARY:
No podcasts in January



PODCASTS in FEBRUARY:
No podcasts in February

PUBLICATIONS in JANUARY:
No publications in January



PUBLICATIONS in FEBRUARY:
No publications in February

EVENTS in JANUARY:
No events in January



EVENTS in FEBRUARY:
No events in February

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

CYPRUS PROBLEM AND BICOMMUNAL RELATIONS

During his speech at a reception he hosted at Ledra Palace to mark the end of the year, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Colin Stewart, stated that there is great potential for a solution to the Cyprus problem. Stewart praised the bi-communal technical committees for their perseverance in finding common ground in a wide range of areas for common benefit, despite many obstacles. The UN official said, among other things, that a sustainability study on waste management of electronic and electrical appliances had been completed and referred to the increase in the volume of trade between the two sides under the Green Line Regulation. The event brought together the respective Greek and Turkish Cypriot¹ leaders, Nicos Anastasiades and Ersin Tatar, for the first time in seven months. The two leaders agreed to meet again, however there was no discussion on the substance of the Cyprus problem.

According to reports by the Cyprus News Agency, a dinner between Anastasiades and Tatar is scheduled to take place at the end of January 2023, as Anastasiades' term in power comes to a close and in light of the ongoing stalemate between the two sides in the Cyprus problem negotiations. It has also been reported that Stewart will travel to New York in January for Antonio Guterres' report on his good offices mission.

On December 15, speaking to the public broadcasters TRT (Turkiye) and BRT (TRNC), the newly appointed Turkish Ambassador to Nicosia, Metin

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

Feyzioglu, said that Varosha was a part of the territory of the TRNC, adding that the issue that needed to be resolved was the property issue: "[...] The TRNC is ... a law-abiding state. I have no doubt that it will resolve the property issue in the fenced-off city of Varosha, in accordance with international law. ... Therefore, when the European Court of Human Rights looks at it, it will say 'okay, it has been resolved.' This is a process. Its opening took two and a half to three years. So, I'm not asking for a lot of patience, I'm asking for a little bit of patience."

On December 20, Anastasiades thanked US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez after he said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan should stop all overflights of Greece and withdraw every Turkish soldier from Cyprus. Menendez told the Senate that the US should not put F-16 fighter jets in the hands of Erdogan. He also said the US needs to hold Erdogan accountable for his behaviour when he violates international law.

The 'Taksim' football field inside the Green Line in Nicosia, which is used by the Cetinkaya football team, but is under the control of the United Nations, will reportedly reopen in January 2023 after works carried out on the pitch were completed. The pitch had been closed since 2014 when the Cyprus International Rally used it for a special route. However, in October 2022, the United Nations accepted that the field be given back to Cetinkaya to be used only for training and preparation matches, after an agreement was struck between UNFICYP, the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey. Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides reiterated that the Republic of Cyprus never consented for the works to be carried out and

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).

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

claimed that UNFICYP had admitted to mishandling the situation.

In an interview to mark the end of 2022, Tatar stated that there is no common point of reference between the two sides in Cyprus and a “mountain of differences” exists in the perception of the nature of a federation. Tatar described 2022 as the year his new policy of two states in Cyprus took root and clarified there was no going back.

On December 29, DISY leader and presidential candidate Averof Neophytou met with former Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci to discuss the Cyprus problem and assess the current situation.

The European Union is offering €1.5m in scholarships to Greek and Turkish Cypriots to study at European colleges and become peace advocates for the reunification of Cyprus. According to the European Commission, the EU's United World Colleges (UWC) scholarship programme has started to bring young Cypriots closer to the EU. The call for applications is open and will run until January 31, 2023. The scholarships concern studies at European colleges for the period 2023-2025. They have been offered to Greek and Turkish Cypriots since 2020. The European Union will fund scholarships for students to study the last two years of high school at one of the four UWC schools: the UWC Adriatic (in Italy), UWC Maastricht (in the Netherlands), UWC Mostar (in Bosnia) and UWC Robert Bosch College (in Germany). This is part of the EU's assistance programme for the Turkish Cypriot community. This is a two-year, all-expenses-paid scholarship programme for Cypriot students aged 15-17 to obtain an international baccalaureate. This programme focuses on inter-community dialogue and reconciliation.

The European Commission signed a new agreement with the United Nations to continue support for the bi-communal Technical Committees with

an additional €1m. The European Commission representation in Cyprus said the support mechanism was launched in 2019 to support and enable the technical committees' efforts to adopt island-wide and intercommunal solutions for issues of common concern for the communities. The committees were established by the two leaders in Cyprus under the auspices of the United Nations. This programme is now entering a second phase as a key EU funding instrument that facilitates the interaction and builds trust between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities. It benefits people across Cyprus, as it funds different initiatives from feasibility studies, activities and the creation of digital tools in areas such as health, gender equality, environment, education and culture.

A statement from the German Embassy issued on December 15 said the “Imagine” project “aims to promote trust and tolerance between the two communities”. The statement was issued following the attendance of German ambassador, Anke Schlimm, at a concert of the “intercommunal children's choir, an event featured in the framework of the ‘Imagine’ project”. The statement said Germany “firmly believes that the promotion of contact and dialogue between students and teachers from the two communities is of great importance in order to advance mutual understanding, tolerance and respect”. The statement said the German Federal Foreign Office has been supporting the Imagine programme since 2017 and that “it is implemented by the Association of Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) and the Home for Cooperation, under the auspices of the bi-communal Technical Committee on Education and with the support of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus”. More than 6,000 students and 700 teachers have participated in the project to date, the German Embassy added. “The German Embassy will continue to support ‘Imagine’ and the AHDR in order to facilitate encounters of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students and teachers

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

at the Home for Cooperation,” its statement continued. The Imagine project was suspended unilaterally by the Turkish Cypriot side last month.

HYDROCARBONS

On December 21, the Energy Ministry announced that a consortium of Italy's ENI and France's TOTAL found between two and three trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas in the Zeus-1 target in block 6 of the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The discovery comes after ENI announced a similar discovery in Cronos-1 back in August 2022, which yielded preliminary estimates of about 2.5 Tcf. Energy Minister Natasa Pilides said the discovery of natural gas in the Zeus-1 target, which facilitates the utilisation of the deposits identified in block 6 of Cyprus' EEZ, was an important development. Pilides pointed out that, currently, the prevailing scenario is the transfer of Cypriot natural gas to terminals in Egypt. According to Pilides, the next confirmatory drilling in the Aphrodite block will be carried out at the beginning of 2023. ENI has been operating in Cyprus since 2013. The company operates blocks 2, 3, 6, 8 and 9, and holds stakes in blocks 7 and 11, operated by TOTAL. Pilides also stated that the government was awaiting Chevron's latest studies with a view for exports to start in 2027. Chevron is looking at ways to export gas from the Aphrodite field, discovered in 2011, via Egypt. According to Pilides, the final study on such a move won't be ready until next year. The minister said she hopes that the proposal for a floating platform will gain traction, although it may cost more, meaning that transporting Cypriot natural gas to terminals in Egypt may be more attractive. Senior fellow at the Global Energy Centre of the Atlantic Council, Charles Ellinas, described the discovery as a positive development but urged caution, as a find of two to three Tcf is not enough to change energy companies' long-term plans. Ellinas also stressed that the EU has still not changed its policy to reduce gas consumption by 2030.

On December 23, Turkey accused Cyprus of increasing tension in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkish foreign ministry spokesperson, Tanju Bilgic, stated that Cyprus' hydrocarbon activities “have been carried out unilaterally,” and “violate the rights of the Turkish Cypriots, who are one of the co-owners of all natural resources of the island,” adding that Turkey “would not allow hydrocarbon exploration or exploitation activities in its continental shelf without consent.”

GREEK CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

On December 8, the 2023 budget, the last budget tabled by the ten-year administration of outgoing President Nicos Anastasiades, was approved by 29 votes in favour and 24 against. As expected, ruling DISY as well as the opposition parties DIKO and DIPA were in favour, while AKEL, EDEK, ELAM and the GREENS voted against. The 2023 budget provides for general government expenditures of €11.29bn and revenues of €11.76bn. The €460m surplus corresponds to 1.7% of GDP. For 2023, the finance ministry projects inflation to recede to 3%, unemployment to decline to 6.4%, and GDP to grow 3%.

According to a report released on December 16 by the Cyprus Statistical Service (Cystat), unemployment in Cyprus increased to 6.8% in the third quarter of 2022, compared with 6.6% during the corresponding period of last year. The number of unemployed persons amounted to 32,868 in the third quarter of 2022, compared with 31,355 persons in the third quarter of 2021.

On December 22, the European Central Bank (ECB) announced it had withdrawn the banking license of Cyprus' RCB Bank Ltd. The decision followed the orderly completion of the bank's voluntary phasing out

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

of its banking operations, as announced in March 2022.

According to a report released by Cystat on December 30, Cyprus' tourism revenue for the period between January and October 2022 reached 90% of those recorded in 2019, despite arrivals reaching 80% of those recorded during that year. According to the report, during the first 10 months of 2022, tourism revenue amounted to €2.28bn, compared to €2.53bn in 2019. Arrivals between January and October 2022 reached 2.94 million passengers, compared to 3.69 million in the same period of 2019.

Figures from the Statistical Service revealed that tourists from Switzerland, the US, Norway and Austria were the biggest spenders in Cyprus, which saw its tourism revenue for October 2022 amount to €319.8m. The revenue marks a 6.8% increase from October 2019, which is seen as the island's record-year for tourism. The arrivals in October 2022, however, were reduced by 8.2%, compared to the same month in 2019. Most visitors arrived from the UK with 150,699 tourists, followed by 33,624 from Israel, 31,556 from Germany, 20,934 from Greece, and 18,871 from Poland. A significant decrease in arrivals from Russia was noted due to the war in Ukraine and sanctions imposed against Russia.

Domestic Developments

According to a Politis poll on the upcoming presidential elections carried out by Noverna and published on December 11, since October 2022, favourite candidate Nikos Christodoulides has seen a slight drop in support, while Andreas Mavroyiannis' support has grown. Christodoulides, who is running as an independent backed by centre-right DIKO, DIPA and socialist EDEK, remains the clear favourite with 29.5%, followed by DISY candidate Averof Neophytou with 17.2%, and AKEL candidate Andreas Mavroyiannis with 15.9%.

On December 22, President Anastasiades appointed Judge Antonis Liatsou to the position of President of the Supreme Court and Judge Katerina Stamatou to the position of president of the Supreme Court. He also proceeded to reappoint the current judges to the two courts. The appointments were made in view of the imminent implementation of the judicial reform and the operation, from the first of July 2023, of the two courts.

On December 24, the Holy Synod elected Paphos bishop Georgios as the new Archbishop of Cyprus. The new archbishop received 11 votes, followed by Limassol bishop Athanasios with four votes while one bishop did not vote. The new Archbishop of Cyprus, Georgios, was born in Athienou in 1949 and holds degrees in Chemistry and Theology. With regards to the Cyprus problem, the new Archbishop Chrysostomos in seeking for all the human rights that European citizens enjoy, meaning free movement across Cyprus, the opportunity to live anywhere on the island and that every person can have a vote, rather than having the Turkish Cypriots, representing just 18% of the population, rule the other 82%. The new archbishop stated his priorities include standing together with every person that needs the Church by supporting large families and offering incentives that can tackle birth deficits.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On December 13, the EAC staff unions announced that the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance took the initiative and convened a meeting where he committed to arrange meetings as soon as possible with the Minister of Energy, Trade and Industry, and with the Minister of Finance, to discuss the issues that concern the workers in EAC. The proposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the trade unions, and by extension to the administration of the EAC, is summarised in three pillars:

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

- Cancellation of the planned strike on December 14, initiation of intensive dialogue between EAC employees' unions under the auspices of the Minister of Energy, as well as separate contacts of the leadership of the workers, both with the Minister of Energy and with the Minister of Finance. The Ministry of Labour will be informed and, if necessary, will be able to exercise its own role.
- Further promotion of renewable energy sources (RES), based on the 10-year plan submitted by the EAC and without the withdrawal of conventional power production units.
- Submission to Parliament of the supplementary budget of the EAC for the creation of new jobs according to the relevant decision of the EAC administration with the full support of the trade unions.

On December 14, the former hourly government staff employed by the LGS company at Larnaca and Paphos airports announced that the strike planned for December 15 was suspended. The reason for the suspension was because of the agreement reached in a meeting with the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. The Trade Unions had initially decided to proceed to strike action due to the impossibility of finding a solution to their demands to be employed until the age of 65, which is the current retirement age. More specifically, they are asking for the LGS company to respect the agreements they have for the former hourly government staff who chose to be employed by ground handling providers, i.e. for both the former hourly government staff and the staff working in ground handling companies to be employed until the age of 65. However, despite the discussion of the whole issue with LGS, both in person and in the presence of the competent Ministries of Labour and Transportation, and the managing company, Hermes Airports Ltd., they have not received any response to resolve the issue at hand.

On December 21, 2022, a cycle of intensive consultations was held, with the aim of reaching an agreement on the working conditions of online platform delivery workers between trade unions and the employer side, under the auspices of the Department of Labour Relations of the Ministry of Labour. The consultations followed a nine-day strike by delivery workers in Wolt company. After the decision to start a statutory dialogue, with a timetable for the final resolution of the problem of regulating the labour rights of the workers in the sector, the delivery workers unanimously decided to end their strike, after nine days of mobilization. In particular, the problem with Wolt started last year, when they began to reduce the delivery worker fee per order. Specifically, last year delivery workers received €3 per order, with the amount decreasing to €2.60, then to €2.40, and now to €2.26 per order. Employees are also considered freelancer-partners of Wolt, and they are officially employed by another company, which is essentially an agent that manages distribution fleets. The agents get 30% of the 2.26 euros, while the employees contribute another 11% to social security and GESY themselves, because they are working as freelancers. With the remaining 59% of their income, they themselves have to maintain their own motorcycles and pay for their fuel and even their uniforms, which they buy from Wolt. The strikers' demand is to reduce the amount of the commission that the agents get and also to increase the fee for each order.

On December 22, an all-union meeting was held with the aim of informing the public about new developments and deciding about the issue of Automatic Price Indexation (ATA). The organizations expressed their dissatisfaction with the attitude of the employers' organizations and also with the delay observed in completing the process concerning ATA, based on the logic envisaged in the transitional agreement of July 2017. The organizations expressed their determination and commitment to collective action aimed

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

at a positive outcome for the restoration of ATA, and they called on all those involved (government and employer organizations) to respect the content of the agreement. The trade unions reaffirmed their strict adherence to the need to extend collective agreements and the ATA institution for all workers in all sectors.

TURKISH CYPRIOTS

Economic Developments

According to the Statistical Institute, the consumer price index was 94.5% higher in 2022 compared to 2021. The consumer prices had risen by 4.5% in December alone. The inflation rate in 2021 was 46.09%. According to the Central Bank data, for the first time after a long time, the Turkish Cypriot government started borrowing in foreign currency and has accumulated €15 million and US\$51.6 million internal debt in 2022. As of the end of 2021, the outstanding internal debt denominated in Turkish Lira was 155 million TL (€10.3 million).

Based on data from the Social Security Department, the Central Bank's third quarterly bulletin showed that as of June 2022, the number of employees registered with the Department still has not recovered to the level where it was in early 2020 just before the pandemic. The number of registered workers, which was 119,568 before the Covid-19 outbreak, decreased to 105,945 in January 2021 and then rose to 117,390 as of June 2022. Foreign workers account for around 40% of the employees registered in the Social Security Department.

According to the Ministry of Tourism the occupancy rate at hotels stood at 43.9% in the first 11 months of 2022. Although the figure is not impressive, there was still a significant rise in numbers compared to the same period in 2021 which was only 27.6%. As a result of the rebound, there was a 210.9% rise in the

number of foreign tourists visiting the TRNC, and a 235.4% increase compared to the previous year for overnight stays bringing the total for the first 11 months to 3,433,981. The number of Turkish nationals visiting the TRNC also rose by 180.4% compared to 2021, reaching 647,148.

A delegation from the Cyprus Turkish Chamber of Industry (KTSO) and Cyprus Turkish Chamber of Shopkeepers and Artisans (KTEZO) visited Brussels to hold talks with EU officials. The delegation included KTSO chairperson, Ali Kamacioglu and KTEZO coordinator, Hurrem Tulga. The delegation met with Judit Rozsa, Director of Coordination, Resources and Aid Programme in the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support of the European Commission. Commenting on their contacts in Brussels, among other things, Kamacioglu stated that they pointed out the "flaws" in the Green Line Regulation, which regulates trade across the divide. "We explained in detail that the scope [of the regulation] is not wide enough", Kamacioglu said. He added that as the KTSO, they are open to any constructive approach and while they are not pursuing a political goal, it is unsettling that they have not made it as far as desired because of political reasons. "Political concerns outside of us must be resolved. We wanted to point this out to EU officials; now we have achieved our goal," Kamacioglu concluded. The coordinator of KTEZO, Tulga said of the talks with the EU officials: "We have been together with the EU on many projects for a long time. ... We have not forgotten the contributions made to businesses during the pandemic. ... The recent inclusion of olive oil, paste, jam and molasses under the Green Line Regulation is the result of ... [our close] relationship".

Relations with Turkey

On December 19, representatives of the ruling parties of Türkiye and Azerbaijan visited the TRNC. As part of their contacts, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Deputy Chairman Numan Kurtulmus

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

and New Azerbaijan Party Deputy Chairman Tahir Budaqov and their accompanying delegations were received by President Ersin Tatar, among others. Speaking during their visit Tatar stated that the TRNC was an important part of the Turkic world and that the support of Türkiye and Azerbaijan was vital for preserving the country's existence. He added that developments and shifting dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean had raised the TRNC's importance which had made it all the more important to have a Turkic state in the region. Also touching upon the admission of the TRNC as an observer member of the Organisation of Turkic States, Tatar said that it was extremely important that the membership had been registered under the name TRNC.

Domestic Developments

The local elections were held on December 25. The elections which should have taken place in June 2022 had been postponed due to the amendments made to the local administration law which had seen the country's 28 municipalities reduced to 18 as part of "the local administration reform". There were 67 mayoral candidates contesting for 18 local governments, 34 of whom were independent. Remarkably, only six of the candidates were women. In a parallel contest, 964 candidates ran for the 220 municipal assembly, or council, seats. Of 208,236 eligible voters, 68.85% turned out to vote. There were no changes in mayors of the capital Nicosia, Morphou (Guzelyurt), Trikomo (Iskele) and Lefka (Lefke), while two other main cities, Kyrenia and Famagusta were taken over by the main opposition CTP (Republican Turkish Party) candidates. The mayor of Guzelyurt, Mahmut Ozcinar, was elected for the seventh time, while Mehmet Harmanci in Nicosia, Hasan Sadıkoğlu in Iskele and Aziz Kaya in Lefka managed to get elected for the third time. The only female candidate who won was the UBP's Fatma Cimen Tuglu in Galatia-Komi Kebir (Mehmetcik-Buyukkonuk). She is only the second woman to get elected to lead a municipality in the history of the TRNC; the only other

woman mayor was Sevim Abas who was elected as the mayor of Louroujina (Akincilar) in 1986.

The elected mayors are as follows:

1. Nicosia / Mehmet Harmanci (Social Democratic Party - TDP)
2. Famagusta / Suleyman Ulucay (CTP)
3. Kyrenia / Murat Senkul (CTP)
4. Morphou (Guzelyurt) / Mahmut Ozcinar (UBP supported by DP and YDP)
5. Trikomo (Iskele) / Hasan Sadıkoğlu (UBP supported by DP and YDP)
6. Lefka / Aziz Kaya (CTP)
7. Kythrea (Degirmenlik) - Louroujina (Akincilar)/ Ali Karavezirler (CTP)
8. Gonyeli-Alayköy (Gerolakkos) / Huseyin Amcaoglu (UBP supported by DP and YDP)
9. Pergamos (Beyarmudu) / Bulent Bebek (Independent)
10. Gecitkale (Lefkoniko) - Catoz (Serdarli) / Halil Kasim (UBP supported by DP and YDP)
11. Mesaoria / Ahmet Latif (CTP)
12. Akanthou (Tatlisu) / Ahmet Hayri Orcan (DP supported by UBP and YDP)
13. Agios Sergios (Yenibogazici) / Katip Demir (Independent)
14. Agios Epiktikos (Catalokoy) -Esentepe (Agios Amvrosios) / Ceyhun Kirok (CTP)
15. Dikomo (Dikmen) / Yüksel Celebi (CTP)
16. Lapithos (Lapta) - Karavas (Alsancak) - Myrtou (Camlibel) / Firat Ataser (Independent)
17. Erenköy - Karpaz Municipality / Hamit Bakırcı (UBP supported by DP and YDP)
18. Galatia-Komi Kebir (Mehmetcik-Buyukkonuk)/ Fatma Cimen Tuglu (UBP supported by DP and YDP)

Although the Prime Minister Unal Ustel had framed the December 25 local elections as being between "sovereign statistes and the federalists" at the beginning of the campaign period, after the election he





FES CYPRUS NEWSLETTER

said that they would support all municipalities to ensure that the public receives the best service from the local administrations. Evaluating the election results, the leader of the main opposition (CTP) Tufan Erhurman said that they were pleased with the results of the election, winning seven of the 18 municipalities, particularly in light of the fact that they ran against the candidates of the governing coalition parties' alliance in most places. The leader of the junior coalition partner, Rebirth Party (YDP), and Minister of Public Works and Transportation, Erhan Arikli, in his evaluation of the election results said that the people had given the government a message: "The outcome of the election is not bad ... but we can't talk of a success. We won eight municipalities but the loss we suffered in Famagusta and Kyrenia has not been good", he said.

Maria Skoullou, a member of the Maronite community living in Kormakitis (Korucam) village which is located on the island's north-western tip hit the headlines of the Turkish Cypriot media after she revealed that her bid to become a candidate for the position of muhtar—the head of a village—was not approved by the Foreign Ministry of the TRNC. In a written statement, the Foreign Ministry said, "Following an assessment, Maria Skoullou's candidacy was deemed to be objectionable on concrete grounds". The statement also said, "The reason why her candidacy was not accepted was not because she is a Maronite. Indeed, all of the other muhtar and elder candidates are also Maronite and Greek Cypriot citizens."

Speaking to a local newspaper, the Minister of Interior, Ziya Ozturkler said that around 4,000 undocumented foreigners have been deported from the TRNC in the last seven months during his stint as minister, and he promised stricter immigration controls. The Prime Minister, Unal Ustel, also said that stricter immigration checks would be carried out for foreign students coming to study in the TRNC. Us-

tel's statement came after a judge slammed higher education institutions and the Education Ministry after it emerged that a foreign national who was sentenced to 18 months in prison for drug offences had been allowed to renew her registration at a language school — and therefore remain in the country legally — despite not turning up for lessons. "They can easily legalise their status by re-registering at any school when they need to, gaining the necessary legal status to stay in the TRNC", the judge said in his ruling. "As a result ... we see ... an increase in the rate of foreigners who are in our country as 'students' engaging in crime", the judge concluded. Following the judge's comments, Ustel told the Turkish Cypriot daily Kibris that "the technical work on the e-Visa Automation System [which will tighten immigration controls] has been completed."

The Refugee Rights Association called on the government to introduce refugee rights laws that respect the principles of "non-refoulement and no punishment". The call was made following a number of cases in which immigrants, particularly from Syria and including children, have been imprisoned or deported for illegal entry.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On December 22, the Public Workers Union (Kamu-Is) marched to the Ministry of Education because its members working as cleaners in public schools have not been paid and have been treated unfairly by the private company outsourced for cleaning services. The demonstration, during which a fire was lit and rocks were "boiled" in a pot to illustrate the hardship faced by the cleaners, was the latest in a series of protests over the matter, which has been unresolved for months. Speaking during the protest, Kamu-Is leader, Ahmet Serdaroglu, accused the Minister, Nazim Cavusoglu, and the coalition government of "violating" human rights and claimed that the cleaners, who are employed by a private firm under a government contract, have been subjected to "pressure and

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online





threats". Serdaroglu also claimed that Prime Minister Unal Ustel, on the campaign trail, said that the cleaners are suffering because they have unionized. Serdaroglu also accused Cavusoglu of "trying to run away from his responsibility" and likened working in cleaning services at schools to "slavery".

Although the minimum wage determination commission convened two times in December, a new minimum wage could not be agreed because the employers' side did not take part in the second meeting held on December 29 citing their busy schedule.

Earlier in the month, the Cyprus Turkish Civil Servants Union (KTAMS) chairperson Guven Bengihan announced that according to his union's calculations, a family of four needed at least 11,153 TL (€578) per month to sustain a healthy diet. Bengihan pointed out that the difference between the minimum wage—8,600TL net (€446)—and the breadline has increased to 2,553TL (€132) as of the end of November.



IMPRINT

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Office Cyprus
20, Stasandrou, Apt. 401
CY 1060 Nicosia

Tel. +357 22 377 336
Email: office@fescyprus.org
Web-Site: www.fescyprus.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/FEScyprus
Twitter: [@fescyprus](https://twitter.com/fescyprus)

Text:
Hubert Faustmann, Yiannis Charalambous,
Sertac Sonan, Enis Porat, Gianna
Chatzigeorgiou and Aileen O'Donoghue

Layout:
Stadtformat Einig & Kazmierczak GbR

If you want to subscribe to this (free) monthly newsletter, please fill in the form on our website:
www.fescyprus.org/newsletter/

If you want to unsubscribe please click the link in your FES Newsletter mail.

Newsletter No.127 DECEMBER 22

Please follow and visit us on:
Twitter | Facebook | Instagram | Online

