



Contents

1.	FES Cyprus Events	2
2.	Cyprus Problem.....	3
3.	Hydrocarbons	4
4.	Greek Cypriots	5
	Economic Developments.....	5
	Domestic Developments	6
5.	Turkish Cypriots	9
	Economic Developments.....	9
	Relations with Turkey.....	10
	Domestic Developments	10
	Labour Relations and Trade Unions	13

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1. FES Cyprus Events

November

**Friday, 01st November 2019,
10.00 am – 5.30 pm**

Cyprus-Institute University of Münster /
University of Nicosia / Agora Dialogue / FES

Conference

**Religion, Religious Spaces and Conflict:
Cyprus, Lebanon, Bosnia**

University of Nicosia,
UNESCO Amphitheater, Nicosia

Open to the public



**Wednesday, 13th November 2019,
6.00 – 8.00 pm**

Civil Society Advocates / FES

Presentation in Greek

**Reflections and Stocktaking on the Implemen-
tation of Obligations under Law 104(I)/2017:
The Way Forward**

Laona Foundation, Limassol

Open to the public



Wednesday, 13th November 2019, 7.30 pm

Goethe Institute / FES

Event

**The Fall of the Berlin Wall:
Living Stories from Eyewitnesses**

Home for Cooperation, Nicosia, Cyprus

Open to the public



Saturday, 16th – Sunday, 17th November 2019

Enorasis / FES / Interior Ministry / Synergia-
Media

Workshop

**15th Friendship Weekend of the Enorasis Social
Cultural Clubs**

Forest Park Hotel, Platres Troodos

Not open to the public



Wednesday, 27th November 2019, 7.15 p.m.

IKME / BILBAN / FES

Cypriots' Voice Symposium

Agios Georgios Tavern Nicosia, Cyprus

Not open to the Public

2. Cyprus Problem

In October the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, invited the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders, Mustafa Akinci and Nicos Anastasiades respectively, to an informal tripartite meeting. The invitation followed a failed attempt conducted in the previous month to reach an agreement on the terms of reference for the resumption of talks to solve the Cyprus Problem. The meeting which is set to take place in Berlin on November 25 is expected to lay down a framework for a potential five party conference in December. Both leaders have accepted the invitation.

Anastasiades and Akinci met at a reception on October 24 at the Ledra Palace hotel in Nicosia's Green Line on the occasion of UN Day. On the side-lines of the reception, both leaders had a brief discussion with UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Elizabeth Spehar. Speaking at the reception Spehar stressed the need for the two leaders to redouble their efforts to conclude the terms of reference and return to negotiations. Akinci and Anastasiades had almost reached a deal on the terms of reference in September after six rounds of separate meetings with the UN Secretary General's envoy, Jane Hall Lute, but failed after the Turkish side reportedly insisted that the issue of political equality for the Turkish Cypriots should be included in the terms prior to any negotiations. Lute is expected to visit the island in November ahead of the trilateral meeting.

The TRNC¹ Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kudret Ozersay said that his Ministry has filed a complaint with the UN regarding a violation of TRNC airspace by Greek fighter jets which took part in a Greek Cypriot National Guard exercise on October 17.

In a joint communique issued by the Embassy of the Slovak Republic following a meeting held at Ledra Palace on October 30, leaders and representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties agreed on the need for environmental legislation to be introduced and strictly adhered to across the island to combat climate change. They also called on the two leaders to resume the negotiations, according to UN resolutions under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General.

According to a recent poll shared with the Sunday Mail in the south and gazeddakibris.com in the north, support for an alternative security system among the Turkish Cypriot community is high. In particular, 46.4% believe that the cur-

¹ The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is only recognised by the Republic of Turkey. While for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, Mustafa Akinci 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 suspended in northern Cyprus pending a political settlement to the Cyprus problem (see Protocol no. 10 of the Accession Treaty).

rent guarantee mechanism should continue unchanged while 37% stated that they view alternatives to the current guarantee system positively. The poll also revealed that a significant proportion believe that the current guarantee system is about protecting Turkish Cypriots and that most Turkish Cypriots still support a federal solution to the Cyprus problem and are not convinced by the debate over alternative solutions. The survey was carried out in September by the Centre for Migration, Identity and Rights Studies (CMIRS) among 500 people.

On October 9, UN Security Council (UNSC) reaffirmed Resolution 550 and 789, adopted in 1984 and 1992 respectively, which refer to the fenced off area of Famagusta. The reaffirmation was welcomed by the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus, which described it as an important move in efforts to prevent new fait accompli. The Turkish Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the other hand, responded with a statement where it was said that *'the work coordinated by our Ministry in line with the decision of our Government will continue decisively in line with international law, taking into consideration the rights of former inhabitants of the closed area of Varosha (Famagusta)'*. The statement also said that *'the UN Security Council, which made a statement recapping resolutions that are not binding in any way, has been put in a position serving the status quo. ... The Greek Cypriot leadership due to its fear of losing its propaganda tools is resolute on taking initiatives which harm its own people – i.e. former*

inhabitants of the fenced area of Varosha who have conveyed to us, on various occasions, that they welcome our [Turkish Cypriot] Government's decision''.

3. Hydrocarbons

The island's effort to import natural gas to power its electricity grid is expected to face further delays after complications emerged in the tender process for the construction of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import terminal at Vassilikos. The latest obstacle to the effort concerns an appeal lodged by a company against a decision to exclude it from the project because of links to an entity involved in a waste treatment scandal. The company, Aktor SA, is part of a consortium comprising China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering Co. Ltd (CPPE), Aktor SA and Metron SA, Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding Co. Ltd and Wilhelmsen Ship Management Ltd that won the tender for the construction of a floating storage regasification unit (FSRU) and other facilities. Aktor is reportedly the sister company of Helector, facing corruption charges related to waste management plants in Paphos and Larnaca. Aktor is also accused of alleged fraud from projects in the Balkans. Due to the allegations and corruption charges, the natural gas company (DEFA) decided to exclude Aktor from the €500m project, prompting it to seek recourse before the tender review board. However, DEFA was poised to push ahead with the procedure. Aktor has asked the tender review

board to halt all actions pending adjudication of its appeal. The board is set to issue its interim decision within days. The contracts were scheduled to be signed on November 6 and 7.

On October 17, the European Council endorsed the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) conclusions of October 14 on Turkey's illegal drillings in the Cypriot EEZ and reaffirmed its solidarity with Cyprus. The 28 EU foreign ministers agreed for 'restrictive measures' targeting those involved in Turkey's hydrocarbon drilling activity off Cyprus. The TRNC Foreign Ministry has criticized the decision and accused the Greek Cypriot side of pursuing maximalist and provocative policies on the issue of hydrocarbons while rejecting the Turkish Cypriot side's proposal to cooperate on the issue. *"All decisions which exclude Turkish Cypriots are a violation of international law and are unacceptable,"* the Ministry's statement said.

Turkey's Energy and Natural Resources Minister Fatih Donmez said that Turkey was ready for cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean with all sides. Speaking on CNN Turk, Donmez said: *"We are not after anyone's territory. We are conducting exploratory drilling in our own continental shelf and in areas licensed by the TRNC and we shall continue to do so"*. Donmez added that initial drilling results were promising.

Turkish Cypriot officials have welcomed the remarks by the CEO of Italian energy firm ENI who said his company would not drill off Cyprus if it meant having to deal with warships.

Ozersay said that effects of the policies implemented by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side in the Eastern Mediterranean on the issue of hydrocarbons had begun to be felt: *"In 2018, this company had witnessed Turkey's seriousness and seen the Turkish Cypriot side's readiness to reach an agreement if these activities were to take place before a settlement. I hope that all actors, including the energy firms, give the Greek Cypriot leadership the right messages. A determined stance in foreign policy aimed at deterrence helps reach results"*.

On October 31, the Turkish drillship Fatih left its location 60 km west of Paphos inside the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) where it was stationed since May. The ship headed to the port of Antalya. The second drillship, the Yavuz, is still operating in offshore block 7 of the Cypriot EEZ.

4. Greek Cypriots

Economic Developments

According to a study conducted by Eurostat, Cyprus' GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) still lags below the levels registered in 2008. GDP per capita stood at €27,500 in 2008 before falling to €25,800 in 2009 and plunging as low as €22,400 in 2014. After hitting a low in 2014, there has been a slow but steady recovery, albeit at a slower pace compared to

other European Union nations, edging up to €23,700 in 2015 and €24,500 in 2016 and 2017.

Domestic Developments

Main opposition party AKEL accused the government of refusing to provide convincing answers concerning its citizenship scheme which reportedly brought the country into international disrepute. AKEL leader, Andros Kyprianou, wanted explanations regarding reports that a Saudi sheikh, whose late father was alleged to have ties with terrorist financing, was granted a Cypriot passport in 2016. Kyprianou also mentioned a recently released Netflix movie, the Laundromat, which contained several references to Cyprus in relation to money laundering. The issue has been highlighted in recent weeks after a Reuters investigation showed how relatives and friends of Cambodia's authoritarian Prime Minister had been granted Cypriot passports in 2016 and 2017. The cabinet launched an investigation into the issue while Anastasiades stated that he would resign "the next day" if he or his law firm is involved in any wrongdoing in the citizenship for investment scheme. Meanwhile on October 29, Interior Minister Constantinos Petrides, announced that three firms; Sterling Diligence, S-RM Intelligence and Risk Consulting and Kroll have been pre-selected to supply background screening services to the government in order to apply enhanced due diligence.

On October 30 Independent MP Anna Theologou announced that she would be representing a new group, 'The Independents', seeking equal treatment against big interests represented by political parties. The group will strive for a more just and prosperous society for everyone, a green economy, a solution to the housing problem, transparency in public contracts, quality education, better pay for workers, higher pensions and the abolition of the unconstitutional provisions introduced in laws in recent years.

On October 29, Giorgos Papadopoulos of The Solidarity Movement was declared an MP for the third time following a parliament decision to return the seat to him. Papadopoulos seat was returned after a long legal procedure and debate on whether the seat, vacated by the party's chairperson Eleni Theocharous in 2016, should go to him or a runner-up of another party.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

The Cyprus Union of Bank Employees (ETYK) had to deal with many different issues this month, involving the Boards of Directors of most banks in Cyprus. The most critical labor dispute, however, concerned the Hellenic Bank Public Company Limited. The heated controversy began when the ETYK requested:

- The immediate integration of former Co-operative Bank of Cyprus (which was merged

with Hellenic Bank recently) employees into the pay scales of Hellenic Bank's employees, based on their duties and responsibilities.

-The full implementation of all existing commitments/agreements for all Hellenic Bank employees (wage restitution, Provident Fund etc.).

-The granting, with retroactive effect from 1 January 2019, of the annual surcharge and price index surcharge (ATA) to all Members.

The Board of Directors of the Hellenic Bank defied the demands and continued to insist on the existing agreements and, on October 11, ETYK therefore held a 24-hour work strike.

Continuing its approach, the Board of Directors of Hellenic Bank unilaterally granted a 2% salary increase to its 2,400 employees based on employee performance. This measure, they said, is a step towards modernization and added that productive and profit-making employees should be compensated. ETYK however, accused the bank management that *"this position of the Hellenic Bank clearly aims at abolishing existing agreements, creating two categories of employees and eventually degrading everyone in the second category"*. They reported that the Hellenic Bank tends to employ a lot of *"seasonal / temporary staff"*, which covers the bank's permanent and non-seasonal needs. Afterwards, they are sent back to unemployment and so forth. ETYK therefore called on Hellenic Bank to immediately hire the *"seasonal"* employees permanently and stated that it should comply with the collective agreements. Once complet-

ed, there was a need to propose a new system of remunerations and promotions. ETYK has decided and is expected to take legal action against the management and the Board of Directors of Hellenic Bank for violating Article 23 of the Constitution which stipulates that employees' salaries are an asset and their non-assignment will result in a criminal offense.

In contrast to Hellenic Bank, the employment relationship of the Bank of Cyprus with ETYK seems to have been restored, even though the renewal of the collective agreement at BOCH (Bank of Cyprus Holdings) is the only one pending since December 2017. The apparent success of the voluntary exit plan, as well as the smooth transfer of approximately 120 Bank of Cyprus employees to the newly established Cyprus Credit Acquisition Company, are strong indications that the relationship between the bank's new management and ETYK is normalized. However, between ETYK and BOCH, the issue of changing payments and promotions system is still pending. This is an issue that employers continue to feel particularly strongly about and expect the union to adopt consensual approaches to regulating. This controversial issue has been on the table since March 2016 and is likely to be resolved in the coming months.

Another issue with a different bank that was underlined by ETYK, is that of Alpha Bank which eventually proceeded to the payment of the annual surcharge and ATA for 2019. The payment, according to the ETYK circular, will have retroactive effect. ETYK now looks forward to

the launch of intensive negotiations for a renewal of the collective agreement at Alpha Bank for the years 2019-2021. At the same time, ETYK and Alpha Bank negotiations regarding the employment status of approximately 150 of its employees are under way. Finally, JCC Company Organization (Payment Systems) granted the annual surcharge and ATA to its entire staff with retroactive effect from 1 January 2019, following intense negotiations and amidst strikes that had taken place early in October.

A 24-hour strike was initially announced by the Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK), the Pan-cyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) and the Cyprus Union of Bank Employees (ETYK) against Cyprus Asset Management Company (KEDIPES) and ALTAMIRA REAL ESTATE on October 14. The strike was cancelled. According to a related announcement, the signing and implementation of the proposal for a Single Collective Agreement dated 16 June 2019 is pending. This proposal was officially submitted by the KEDIPES Board of Directors. The main topic of discussion was the renewal of the collective agreement and the suggestions for improvement of the proposal already submitted by ETYK to KEDIPES. However, KEDIPES representatives listened to the views of the ETYK delegation and will consider them until mid-November. ETYK is awaiting the final response of the new KEDIPES administration and will not oppose the completion of the negotiations with the new administration, hoping for an improved agreement.

On October 18, the branches of the Health Insurance Organization (HIO) of the trade unions SEK and PEO held a two-hour strike. HIO staff and their families are uninsured and not covered for inpatient health care which will begin to be provided by June 2020 with the full implementation of the General Healthcare System (GHS known as GESY). *"HIO is reluctant to meet its specific contractual and regulatory obligation to its staff and families for inpatient care, because the corresponding budget expenditure for 2019 remains committed by the House of Representatives despite the efforts and clarification that it will only cover the cost of Inpatient Care which [...] will begin to be provided [...] from 1st June 2020 onwards."* The organizations call on the Parliament Health Committee and parliamentary parties to immediately release the expenditure of the HIO Budget for 2019 in order to stop discriminating against HIO employees. They also urge the HIO to make decisions that will resolve the problem even if the parliament continues to be reluctant to consider releasing the related expense, since staff and their families should not remain uninsured and thus exposed to health issues.

The trade unions SEK and PEO suspended the Community Council's two-hour strike on October 25th. The strike was decided on the grounds of unfulfilled needs of Community Councils in staffing. According to the announcement, the decision to suspend the strike was taken after a meeting with the General Director of the Ministry of the Interior where it was agreed to send a

new letter to the Governors, the Union of Municipalities and Communities and the Department of Administration and Personnel of the Ministry. Concerning the fulfilment of permanent staff needs in the Community Councils Meetings have been agreed to take place in the upcoming weeks in order to resolve employees' retirement issues and to conclude on a collective agreement.

The Cyprus Hotels Association (PASYXE) and the Cyprus Tourist Association (ACTE) have decided to accept the proposal of the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Security, Zeta Emilianidou, to renew their collective agreement with employees. According to a related announcement, PASYXE and ACTE, at their joint general assembly have put before their members the mediation proposal of Emilianidou to renew the hotel employees' contracts. Opinions were exchanged during the meeting and clarifications were given to the members, followed by a vote in which the proposal was approved by the majority. A letter will be sent to the Minister. The ministerial mediation proposal provides, among other things, for a 5.5% wage increase. The increase will be phased in over four years on an annual basis. Specifically, for 2019 a lump sum will be retroactively equal to 0.5% of the basic salary. On January 1, 2020 a 1.5% increase will be granted, January 1, 2021 a 1.5% increase and on January 1, 2022 a wage increase rate of 2%. In addition, all labour costs include the employer's obligation to pay 1% of the monthly salary of all staff to the Hotel Em-

ployees' Welfare Fund. The mediation proposal stipulates that from January 1, 2022 work during the holidays will be double payable and on Sunday an additional remuneration corresponding to 25% of the daily salary of each employee.

On October 24 and 31 at the Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC) held a two-hours strike. This was organised by trade unions in order to press the Board of Directors to resolve their problems. In particular, the unions are demanding a reinstatement of the cuts made in their wages and benefits during the crisis (the Ministerial Council rejected this, at least until the pending decision of the Administrative Court). The trade unions also demand to maintain the EAC's contribution (5,9% of each employees' salary) to the Workers' Health Fund after the start of the second phase of the GHS in June 2020, which is also in conflict with a decision of the Ministerial Council for Semi-Governmental Organizations.

5. Turkish Cypriots

Economic Developments

The increase in the cost of living for the month of September has been announced at 1.88%.

In the first six months of 2019, both exports and imports have sharply declined compared to the same period of 2018: Exports have declined by 17% from \$63,7 million to 52,7 million while imports have decreased by 24% from 885,6 to 672,4 million. Both figures are the lowest since

2010 and can be interpreted as a sign of a slowing down of the economy.

Relations with Turkey

Turkish Cypriot President Akinci issued a statement regarding the Turkish military's operation in northern Syria where among other things he said: *"Now, even if we say Operation Peace Spring, what is being spilled is not water, it is blood. For this reason, it is my greatest wish that dialogue and diplomacy come into play as soon as possible"*. He drew similarities between the 1974 'Turkish Peace Operation' and 'Operation Peace Spring' stating that both operations were ultimately war. The statement was not well received in Ankara. The Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan responded that the Turkish Cypriot leader had *"crossed the line"* and that *"I believe our kinsmen in north Cyprus will shortly give him the lesson he deserves"*. Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay also slammed Akinci's remarks: *"The statement made by Akinci as a President today is lacking history awareness and knowledge. I believe that this unfortunate statement does not reflect the opinion of the Turkish Cypriots"*. Later in the month, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also joined the chorus. Speaking during an interview with Anadolu Agency, and referring to criticism in the TRNC from some quarters over Turkey's recent military campaign, Cavusoglu said *"The Turkish Cypriot community showed huge support for Turkey's operation but we need to keep*

some union members or politicians separate from [the rest of the] Turkish Cypriot community. There are some union members and politicians in the TRNC" who "if you ask them if they support Turkey or the Greek [Cypriot] side, they would take the stance of the Greek Cypriot side." Akinci, who did not refer to Cavusoglu by name responded: *"I would like it to be known that the Turkish Cypriot people as a whole want nothing but for Turkey to be a country free of terrorism and to be a happy and safe country within its own boundaries"*. Akinci also said that Turkish Cypriots did not wish to be a *"minority of the Greek Cypriot community"* nor did they want to have an *"unhealthy"* and *"unbalanced"* relationship with Turkey.

Domestic Developments

Akinci's statement regarding the Turkish military operation in northern Syria sparked a barrage of criticism from UBP-HP government too. *"I read President Mustafa Akinci's remarks with disappointment and shock,"* Prime Minister Tatar said. *"The UBP and our government strongly condemns Akinci for his stance and urges him to come to his senses,"* Tatar added. Deputy Prime Minister Kudret Ozersay also condemned Akinci's remarks with a statement where he said *"President Akinci's latest statements are quite unfortunate and disruptive in terms of our foreign relations and communal peace and harmony"*. He said that his government supported Turkey's struggle and deter-

mined stance against terrorism and security risks in the region.

Moreover, the UBP Party Assembly held an extraordinary meeting to discuss Akinci's remarks. In a written statement issued after the meeting, the Party Assembly argued that Akinci's remarks did not reflect the thoughts and feelings of the Turkish Cypriot people. It said that the statement was aimed at hurting relations between the TRNC and Turkey. *"As Mr Akinci has made statements raising questions regarding motherland Turkey's and the Turkish Cypriot people's existence and interests, it has become clear he no longer represents the political will of the Turkish Cypriot people. In light of the fact that there is little time left before the negotiations and that he has lost the confidence of the Turkish Cypriot people, we urge that he does not take part in negotiations on the Cyprus Problem"*. Akinci's office hit back at the UBP party assembly's statement with the spokesperson Baris Burcu commenting: *"To think that the authority bestowed on President Mustafa Akinci with a decision taken by the body of a political party can be removed is absurd. The people's will is shaped by the people's vote and does not just vanish because a party body wishes it to"*.

During a recent interview with Deutsche Welle, Akinci said that he would decide early next year whether he would seek a second term in office or not. In a written statement Ozersay also said that he had not decided yet whether he would be running for president or not. The upcoming presidential election caused some friction be-

tween the coalition partners; the National Unity Party (UBP) and the People's Party (HP). Reportedly, before the formation of the coalition, the UBP leader Ersin Tatar had assured the HP leader Kudret Ozersay that he would not run for the president, implicitly opening the way for Ozersay's candidacy. However, recently Tatar came under increasing pressure from his party to run.

A poll, conducted by Centre on Migration, Identity and Rights Studies (CMIRS), showed that Akinci remained the most popular potential candidate even though his support fell from 33% to 31,8% in the last three months before September. The CTP leader Tufan Erhurman was second with 17% (up from 16%) while Ozersay received the support of only 4,8%. As Tatar had ruled out running, his name was not on the list of potential candidates; 8,2% of those polled said they would support the UBP Famagusta MP Oguzhan Hasipoglu.

Prime Minister Ersin Tatar has expressed the National Unity Party's (UBP) views regarding the trilateral meeting scheduled to take place in Berlin Germany on November 25. In a written statement Tatar reminded the UBP Party Assembly's statement (quoted above) and said *"We believe that Akinci is making some moves with the forthcoming elections in mind but whatever he does, the people do not trust him anymore"*. He said that the opposition to Akinci by the political parties which held the majority of seats in the Turkish Cypriot parliament and Ankara was clear. *"Under these circumstances,*

it would be wrong for Akinci to sit at the table with the Greek Cypriot leader to discuss vital issues regarding sovereignty, security, territory, citizenship, guarantees and governance and power-sharing," he said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kudret Ozersay said that there was nothing new or exciting about the trilateral meeting scheduled to take place on November 25.

Tufan Erhurman has been re-elected - unopposed - as the leader of the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) on October 6th. The 72-seat party assembly was also elected. The newly elected party assembly has re-elected Erdogan Sorakin as the Secretary General of the party.

Erhurman said that his party remained committed to a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus Problem. He also said that a solution to the Cyprus Problem can only be found through negotiations under the UN umbrella. Erhurman said that a solution to the Cyprus problem was one of the CTP's three-pronged visions along with a proactive foreign policy and a strong TRNC economy that could stand on its own two feet.

The former Tourism Minister and the Famagusta MP Fikri Ataoglu had announced his candidacy to become the next leader of the Democrat Party (DP) at the party congress scheduled for November 30.

The parliament overwhelmingly voted in favour (41 for, and 2 against) of lifting former Prime Minister Huseyin Ozgurgun's immunity from prosecution, following a report submitted by a cross-party committee that unanimously recommended lifting Ozgurgun's immunity, paving the way for a criminal investigation into the sources of his personal wealth. Subsequently, bank accounts and other assets of Ozgurgun and his wife have been frozen. According to the committee report, Ozgurgun had 21 bank accounts containing 2,773,800TL, 242,000 euros, 325,800 pounds and 258,525 dollars. Sources of the wealth could not be established by the committee which also said in its report that 171,000TL, a vehicle and a property had not been identified on his declaration of assets submitted to the Parliament but were subsequently found to belong to him.

According to the report of Turkish Cypriot weekly Cyprus Today, a former mayor of Nicosia and scores of councillors and council employees are being sued by the state for almost nine million TL. The compensation is being pursued by the Audit Office in relation to alleged losses incurred by the council from 2008 to 2011 due to "irregular expenditure". The single biggest amount – 2.11 million TL – is being demanded from ex-mayor, Cemal Bulutogullari.

It is reported that almost 900 cases of domestic violence have been filed with the Unit to Combat Violence Against Women since it was formed a year ago.

Daylight saving time came to an end at the end of October. This means there will be a one-hour difference with Turkey until the end of March as Turkey no longer observes daylight saving time. On the plus side there is no time difference with the south of the island.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

Members of the Trade Unions Platform held a protest outside the Parliament against the Financial Cooperation Protocol signed recently between the TRNC and Turkey. The demonstration coincided with the return of MPs from their summer recess, with protesters holding a banner that read "No to extinction". Reading out a statement on behalf of the platform, Primary School Teachers' Union (KTOS) chairperson, Emel Tel, said that with the signing of the protocol the government was "*pushing*" the "*Turkish Cypriots towards extinction*".

Building sites will be shut down if they fail to adhere to tougher health and safety measures introduced to reduce the number of workplace injuries and deaths, Labour and Social Security Minister, Faiz Sucuoglu, told Cyprus Today. New regulations have been drawn up in line with EU standards of safety training and precautions for those working in the construction sector. While the Work Health and Safety Act was passed in 2008, a lack of secondary regulations has meant that the law has had little effect, Sucuoglu said. He added that three sets of regulations covering

risk evaluation, certification and work health and safety on building sites were enacted last month under the provisions of the 2008 Act. A total of 37 workers were killed in construction sites since 2009, accounting for more than half of the 68 workplace fatalities in the period.

Elsewhere, Sucuoglu said that the number of illegal workers from overseas was estimated to be some 9,000 in addition to nearly 48,000 foreign nationals legally employed in the northern part of Cyprus.

Imprint:

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