



Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution [2674 \(2023\)](#), requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on his good offices by 4 July 2023, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement. In the resolution, the Council encouraged the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to provide written updates to the Secretary-General's mission of good offices on the actions that they had taken in support of the relevant parts of the resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement, and requested the Secretary-General to include the contents of those updates in his report. The updates submitted by the two leaders are contained in annexes I and II to the present report.

2. The present report is focused on developments from 13 December 2022 to 12 June 2023. It provides an update on the activities carried out by the Secretary-General's mission of good offices under the leadership of his Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus, Colin Stewart. It also includes an update on the Secretary-General's ongoing engagement with the sides.

II. Background and context

3. Nikos Christodoulides was elected as a result of two rounds of presidential elections, on 5 and 12 February 2023, in the Republic of Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar, congratulated Mr. Christodoulides on becoming the new Greek Cypriot leader. They had an informal face-to-face meeting held under the auspices of the Deputy Special Adviser on 23 February before Mr. Christodoulides took office. The joint appearance of the leaders raised public interest in a renewed dialogue on the Cyprus issue. While the two leaders have not met in person since, they have maintained regular direct contact.

4. Upon assuming office, Mr. Christodoulides stated that the Cyprus issue was a priority, while putting an emphasis on the potential for a greater role of the European Union in the peace process. He also retained both the Greek Cypriot negotiator and the Greek Cypriot coordinator for the technical committees, and the dialogue convened by the Deputy Special Adviser with the two sides continued.



5. Negative rhetoric in the media between the sides regarding incidents and civilian activities in the buffer zone continued during the reporting period, with a focus on areas in and adjacent to the buffer zone and in the fenced-off area of Varosha (see the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) (S/2023/498)). Such incidents adversely affected the regular engagement on issues of shared concern, making flexibility vis-à-vis the peace process less likely.
6. Continuous engagement was sustained with the two sides throughout the reporting period. On 15 and 16 March 2023, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary A. DiCarlo, visited the island and held separate bilateral meetings with the two leaders. The Deputy Special Adviser also continued his regular meetings with the two leaders. Regular trilateral meetings continued between the representatives of the two leaders and the Deputy Special Adviser focusing on the activities and plans of 12 technical committees and issues affecting the daily lives of Cypriots. Discussions were held around a potential mechanism involving the Technical Committee on Crisis Management, including in the event of earthquakes, fires, floods and oil spills. Both leaders assigned this area important priority, given the earthquakes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye in February 2023 that claimed thousands of lives, including 49 Turkish Cypriots, as well as seasonal forest fires on the island.
7. As described in more detail in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (S/2023/498), following the earthquakes, all communities helped with the provision of humanitarian assistance for victims, and UNFICYP helped to transfer goods through the buffer zone. However, there were also expressions of regret and frustration by the public because the sides were unable to overcome political obstacles to cooperate more fully to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the victims.
8. The regional dynamics and the bilateral relations between the guarantor powers of Greece and Türkiye improved during the reporting period, which was marked by elections in the two countries, the earthquakes in Türkiye and a train accident in Greece on 28 February. The period saw mutual expressions of solidarity across the island and by the Governments of Greece and Türkiye and the people over the tragic events, the rapid deployment of humanitarian assistance from Greece to Türkiye and the restoration of high-level engagement between the two Governments after an extended period during which tensions had gradually risen between them. Following his re-election, the President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, visited the north of the island on 12 June with members of his Cabinet.
9. Efforts continued to sustain and develop the dialogue and cooperation among the religious leaders of Cyprus, to uphold and advance human rights, including the fundamental right to religious freedom or belief, and to build confidence within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. While almost daily interaction was sustained between representatives of the religious communities of the island, facilitated by the Office of the Religious Track, the work in recent months has been impaired by political tensions, resulting in challenges related to religious pilgrimages, as described in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (S/2023/498). Joint efforts to provide safe spaces for refugees, asylum-seekers and unaccompanied minors were intensified, and the network was expanded to include other religious communities in Cyprus and faith-based institutions.
10. During the reporting period, meetings of representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia continued to be held regularly, with joint statements issued expressing a willingness

to cultivate a positive climate for a swift resumption of talks under United Nations auspices. On the occasion of the thirty-fourth anniversary of the meetings of political parties, there was a reception and performance by the Bicomunal Choir for Peace in Cyprus at the Ledra Palace Hotel on 16 May and a visit to the Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus at the Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Centre in Nicosia.

III. Status of the process: United Nations Headquarters-based efforts and engagement with the parties

11. Discussions have continued on the way forward with the leaders of the two communities and their representatives, as well as representatives of Greece, Türkiye and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. During her visit, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs held separate meetings with Mr. Christodoulides and Mr. Tatar to discuss the way forward on the Cyprus issue. In addition, she met with representatives of the technical committees, civil society, including women's and youth groups, and visited the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus. All interlocutors expressed support for the continued efforts of the United Nations, and engagement continues in the search for a way forward.

IV. Status of the process: activities of the Secretary-General's mission of good offices

12. The Secretary-General's mission of good offices continued to engage a broad network of interlocutors, both on the island and in the relevant capitals, to promote intra-island interaction, cooperation and trust-building and to keep international partners updated regarding the activities of the mission. The Deputy Special Adviser held 109 meetings with the two leaders and their representatives, political parties, religious leaders, civil society organizations and actors, the European Union, the World Bank and the diplomatic community, as well as with visiting senior officials from Member States' capitals. He also visited Brussels between 10 and 12 May 2023 to engage with European Union officials. This visit provided an opportunity to, among other things, exchange views on cooperation on Cyprus and discuss current dynamics on the island. Staff from the mission held 185 meetings with interlocutors, including the technical committees, and conducted visits to Greece, Türkiye and the United Kingdom for working-level meetings with relevant guarantor power counterparts.

13. The technical committees formed by the leaders of the two communities in order to improve the daily lives of Cypriots continued to meet and work under the auspices of the good offices mission, albeit with mixed results. With UNFICYP support, the good offices mission coordinated and facilitated the work of the committees, with a view to sustaining dialogue and cooperation between the two sides and addressing challenges and shared issues of importance. During her visit, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs stressed the critical importance of the committees' work in promoting ties and building a conducive environment for peace (see [S/2023/498](#) for more details on those technical committees supported by UNFICYP, including on crossings and crime and criminal matters).

14. The weekly bilateral meetings with the two sides and trilateral dialogue between the Deputy Special Adviser, the Greek Cypriot negotiator and the Turkish Cypriot special representative saw some entrenching of positions in the latter part of the reporting period but remained a crucial avenue to support the technical committees. During their first informal meeting, both leaders pledged their commitment to the work of the technical committees and discussed a range of ideas for future

consideration. Overall progress was shown in the areas of crisis management, gender equality, cultural heritage, crime and criminal matters, economic and commercial matters and health. Other technical committees including on broadcasting, crossings, culture and environment, worked on formulating new initiatives and either communicated or met regularly. Lastly, the Technical Committee on Education continued to face serious blockages and the Technical Committee on Humanitarian Affairs met only once during the reporting period, with no concrete action or activity agreed. In addition to the above, other issues that had been discussed for many months saw no progress, such as the challenges around irregular migration and the question of how to work together on humanitarian and criminal aspects, in order to more effectively address refugees, economic migrants and human trafficking. Most recently, issues related to the Mia Mila/Haspolat wastewater treatment plant were discussed to ensure the continuation of this bicomunal mechanism.

15. Most notably during the reporting period, the two sides agreed to enhance their cooperation on crisis management, including with respect to earthquakes, fires, oil spills and any other humanitarian crisis, through the Technical Committee on Crisis Management. On 11 and 18 May, meetings were held among members of the Technical Committee and experts from both sides to discuss preparedness, prevention and response protocols in the case of, respectively, earthquakes and wildfires. The latter meeting was held following a large wildfire that had broken out on 5 May in the north, close to the buffer zone, during which assistance was provided from the south, facilitated through UNFICYP.

16. The mission of good offices, together with UNFICYP, continued to facilitate the work of the Technical Committee on Gender Equality, which organized a seminar on women's participation in peacemaking on 9 May. The seminar was aimed at raising awareness of the precedent of women playing key roles in the Cyprus peace talks over the years. Both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot women who have been active in the peace talks attended and spoke about their experience, while sharing their reflections on the importance of women's inclusion in efforts to resolve the Cyprus issue. The event was attended by the Greek Cypriot negotiator and the Turkish Cypriot special representative. Subsequent engagements with civil society, including women and young people, to solicit views on a broad range of topics in order to prepare the ground for a possible future settlement, as well as to enhance contact, the sharing of experiences and the building of trust between the two communities, are planned.

17. On 15 March, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs opened a photo exhibition entitled "Inclusive diplomacy: women's participation in the Cyprus talks" in the buffer zone in Nicosia. The exhibition highlighted for the first time the role played by women in the Cyprus settlement negotiations over the years. The opening ceremony was followed by a discussion with women who had participated in the talks. On 22 May, the Deputy Special Adviser hosted a reception entitled "The road to sustainability: women's participation in the Cyprus talks". The event was intended to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of women to the Cyprus peace process over the years and was attended by the Greek Cypriot negotiator and the Turkish Cypriot special representative, women who had played leading roles in the past talks and representatives from the technical committees and civil society.

18. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters and the Committee's Joint Contact Rooms (in Nicosia and Pyla/Pile) continued their cooperation and exchange of information on crime and criminal matters. There were encouraging results, including the exchange of suspects and police operations supported by the two sides, in particular in Pyla/Pile. On 31 May, the Technical Committee held a workshop on preventing child abuse and gender-based violence.

19. Notwithstanding growing external challenges to its work, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage continued to work productively and to meet in person on a weekly basis. The planned renovation of various buildings and monuments of cultural significance have continued throughout the island. In addition, significant funding support secured from the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas, including thanks to the active involvement of the Embassy of France in Nicosia, has allowed the Technical Committee to begin to implement two additional major conservation projects. The Technical Committee, however, started to decrease the number of projects, sustained European Union funding notwithstanding. The Technical Committee is expected to further curtail its activities in the coming months, reflecting an increase in the cost of labour and construction material.

20. The Technical Committee on Health continued to exchange information on the epidemiological situation on both sides and deliver coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines to the Turkish Cypriot community, as needed. Owing to the interruption of supply lines from Türkiye in the aftermath of the earthquakes, the Technical Committee agreed that the Greek Cypriots would provide medicines and vaccines to the Turkish Cypriots, which were subsequently delivered through the Committee. Following the incidences of sheep pox found among livestock in the Turkish Cypriot community, the Subcommittee on Veterinary Affairs of the Technical Committee shared information on the epidemiological situation and actions taken by both sides to eradicate the disease, including the vaccination of thousands of animals in the affected areas.

21. The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters continued to meet regularly in order to advance business-driven initiatives to bring Cypriots closer and improve their livelihoods, including in the field of waste management. The Technical Committee started consultations on launching a young professionals internship pilot programme across the island, with the support of both Chambers of Commerce. Long-standing efforts by the Technical Committee were complemented by support from the European Commission and other stakeholders and culminated in the institution of measures by the Greek Cypriot side to enable Turkish Cypriots to open bank accounts in the south. While the Technical Committee focuses on ensuring that this new measure is implemented, related efforts to allow bank transactions between the two sides should continue. Discussions were held on the ways to facilitate the crossing of commercial vehicles.

22. The Technical Committee on Environment continued to move forward on numerous plans, with the co-Chairs meeting weekly to discuss ongoing and future projects. As a next step regarding their proposed project on carob tree pruning, an important process for the preservation of this cultural product, the Technical Committee carried out a visit to a site in the buffer zone in advance of a possible pruning and brush cleaning. The Technical Committee also met with young environmental activists working to address the climate crisis, considered networking opportunities to promote their website and planned the release of animation videos raising awareness of environmental issues.

23. The Technical Committee on Broadcasting and Telecommunication maintained a productive role in addressing a range of frequency interference-related issues. The project paving the way for the deployment of 5G networks across the island continued, with the clearance of the 700 MHz frequency bandwidth and the introduction of 5G in the south since May 2022. It is estimated that the project will be finalized in the north in the third quarter of 2023.

24. The Technical Committee on Crossings continued discussions on proposals for improving the flow at existing crossing points, especially Agios Dometios/Metehan

crossing. In addition, the Turkish Cypriots proposed a dedicated crossing for commercial vehicles, as a joint project to increase people-to-people contact and intercommunal trade. To mark the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the crossing points on 27 May, a bicomunal rally of civil society organizations was organized. Both Chambers of Commerce and other organizations in both communities made calls to open more crossing points and improve current crossings.

25. On 4 March, the Technical Committee on Culture held an event to present the winners of a video and drawing competition for children and young people. The Technical Committee's proposal on "Connecting arts", a networking and mapping event for arts in Cyprus, has been approved and is expected to be held during the next reporting period.

26. The Technical Committee on Education did not meet during the reporting period, and no projects were implemented. The Technical Committee took no action to promote peace education across the island or to implement the recommendations contained in its 2017 joint report, as called for by the Security Council. Since October 2022, the Turkish Cypriot community has suspended its participation in the award-winning peace education project "Imagine" under the auspices of the Technical Committee.

27. The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Affairs met once during the reporting period and, while the members considered ideas on how to assist the Turkish Cypriots following the February earthquakes, no decision or action was taken.

28. A new agreement between the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was signed in December 2022 on the modalities to launch a second phase of the European Union's support facility to the technical committees. Following several rounds of consultations among the mission of good offices, the two sides, the European Union and UNDP, an understanding was reached in order to allow the second phase to proceed. Subsequently, at the request of the two sides the mission and UNDP organized information sessions for the 12 technical committees in February 2023 to provide practical guidance on how the support facility could benefit the activities of the committees. The discussions proved fruitful, and the co-Chairs expressed appreciation for the detailed explanations provided to them on the new funding modalities.

29. Discussions continued on a number of initiatives and confidence-building measures, with the sides further exploring the idea of a bicomunal renewable energy power plant to be located in the buffer zone, based on mutual agreement and for the benefit of the two sides. An international tender for a pre-feasibility study for the project was launched in late January 2023. The study is expected to be finalized by late 2023 when further steps will be assessed by the two sides. Discussions also progressed concerning the two sides' aspiration to extend the Pedieos/Kanlı Dere linear river park and to expand and connect it with the north of Nicosia. The sides agreed on a temporary solution using the Ledra Palace Hotel crossing point to ensure that the project moved forward without delay.

30. Interactions with the World Bank on issues of common interest and concern on the island continued, including during the Bank's visit to the island on 30 May in the context of the launch of its most recent macroeconomic monitoring note on the Turkish Cypriot economy.

31. In line with Security Council resolution [2674 \(2023\)](#), and its particular focus on facilitating the meaningful participation of civil society actors in the peace process, the mission of good offices continued to maintain extensive contact with civil society. Regular briefings to students and young people were also held in accordance with the mission's mandate and activities, including through participation in the Ledra Palace

Hotel networking forum on 30 March. In addition, on 11 June, the Deputy Special Adviser attended a meeting with academics as part of the Cyprus Academic Dialogue (see [S/2023/498](#) for details on the targeted programmes and activities carried out by UNFICYP to convene and connect civil society actors).

32. Young people's meaningful participation remains a key dimension of building and sustaining peace on the island. It was highlighted in particular during the visit of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs when she met with a group of young people (between 25 and 35 years of age), with Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot and Maronite attendees. Topics discussed included employing environmental concerns, business opportunities and entrepreneurship as instruments for rapprochement in order to increase the engagement between young people.

33. The Secretary-General's mission of good offices continued to work with UNFICYP to support environmental peacebuilding initiatives and activities, including the United Nations Youth Champions for Environment and Peace programme, which has brought together a group of young people from both communities to engage in climate action and advocacy since 2020. On 4 May, both United Nations missions on the island brought together alumni from the three previous cohorts of Youth Champions to exchange views and discuss plans for possible future action. Discussions continued with members of the Local Conference on Youth formed in 2022 in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as with the Technical Committee on Environment.

34. On 23 May, the Deputy Special Adviser hosted the heads of the two Chambers of Commerce in the United Nations Protected Area. The participants stressed the need to preserve existing economic ties across the island while also forging new ones, including through new or more efficient crossing points. This event came after a joint declaration issued on 12 May by both Chambers of Commerce in which they reiterated their commitment to continuing to promote further convergence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots through increased Green Line Regulation trade. On 26 May, the European Union announced a new initiative to provide information and technical assistance to Cypriots interested in trading across the Green Line.

V. Observations

35. The continued absence of substantive dialogue on issues related to the peace process between the two sides continues to deepen the differences of views on the way forward. At the same time, the division between the communities also continues to grow wider. Any opportunities for building trust and good will between the sides that might arise in the coming period should be seized with meaningful initiatives. Such initiatives are crucial to creating momentum towards dialogue that could ultimately chart a path back to settlement talks. An important step forward would be an agreement with the sides on an appointment of a United Nations envoy, who could explore ways to reach common ground towards resuming negotiations for a lasting settlement in Cyprus.

36. While the underlying positions of the two sides on the peace process remained far apart, the first face-to-face meeting of Mr. Christodoulides and Mr. Tatar was a positive step in establishing a connection between the two Cypriot leaders. I encourage the two leaders to be proactive in seeking mutually acceptable modalities for dialogue at their level, given that I believe that this remains crucial for finding a mutually agreeable way forward. I also welcome the direct channel of communication established between the two leaders as a means to build confidence and to exchange views on day-to-day issues of mutual concern.

37. My mission of good offices remained engaged in facilitating meetings and discussions at various levels and promoting contact and rapprochement between the communities. The continuity of the work of the technical committees following the change in Greek Cypriot leadership and the commitment of both sides after the elections to pick up the pace of the committees' activities is welcomed. However, considering the many pressing issues that would benefit from intra-island cooperation, the technical committees could do more. In particular, the roadblocks facing the Technical Committee on Education are unfortunate and should be addressed. Delays facing other committees in the implementation of their proposed activities should also be resolved.

38. I continue to call upon the two sides to provide the technical committees with the support and leeway necessary in order to preserve their ability to function, deliver results and address matters with island-wide implications. The technical committees, where both communities can discuss and address issues of common concern, should be protected and insulated from larger political discussions and problems in and adjacent to the buffer zone involving UNFICYP.

39. I am heartened by the solidarity expressed across the island for the victims and survivors of the devastating earthquakes in the region that affected the Turkish Cypriot community directly, as well as for the victims and survivors of the train crash in Greece that affected the Greek Cypriot community directly. Enhancing cooperation on natural and man-made crises and developing concrete proposals to cover coordinated prevention and response are of utmost importance and should be implemented in a timely manner. This is an opportunity to work together constructively.

40. The extension of the European Union's funding for the technical committees, through its support facility, is welcomed, and I appreciate the commitment to sustaining the activities of these important bodies on the island. European Union support to projects under discussion such as the renewable solar energy power plant to be potentially based in the buffer zone and the extension of the Pedieos/Kanlı Dere river path to the north of Nicosia, carries significant potential for bringing the two sides closer together and providing tangible benefits for all, should a mutually agreeable way forward be identified and agreed.

41. I encourage the two leaders and their representatives to discuss, agree and implement mutually acceptable confidence-building measures that can contribute to an environment more conducive to a settlement. I urge the two leaders to engage in discussions on their respective proposals that have been put forward in the spirit of building trust and finding common ground for the benefit of all. To this end, both leaders should actively promote people-to-people contact, cooperation and trade, including through improving existing crossing points and the opening of new ones. The two sides should also work together on issues related to irregular migration. Consideration of helpful unilateral steps or gestures should also be given serious attention because these may constitute important investments towards a mutually agreeable settlement.

42. I once again echo the Security Council's call for greater engagement with civil society and urge the two leaders to encourage contact and cooperation between the two communities. I call upon the leaders to also aim for more inclusive cooperation and links between the two communities now, and ultimately in the peace process, and to effectively engage and involve women, minorities, young people and persons with disabilities in discussions related to a shared future on the island and incorporate their views accordingly. The participants in the outreach activities undertaken by my mission of good offices have shown a great interest in engaging with their political leadership on issues of importance and demonstrated the value of more inclusivity.

43. The period under review highlighted an increased number of public events and official interaction designed to be used as catalysts to disseminate the message that expanding trade and business links, as well as ensuring the infrastructure to support them, is one of the best ways to restore confidence in a settlement. Seizing the opportunity in the coming period to forge greater economic activity between the two sides makes good business sense and would have important positive impacts on the lives of Cypriots. More importantly, each incremental improvement can pave the way towards a mutually agreeable settlement.

44. I have repeatedly stressed the importance of the parties refraining from taking unilateral action both in and adjacent to the buffer zone that could raise tensions, while also calling upon all parties to engage in dialogue in order to resolve their differences. I reiterate my concern over developments in the fenced-off area of Varosha and note that the position of the United Nations on Varosha remains unchanged. I recall the decisions of the Security Council on the matter, notably its resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992), and underscore the importance of adhering fully to those resolutions.

45. I commend the Governments of Greece and Türkiye for the positive shift made in their bilateral relations. I encourage the two leaders in Cyprus to re-engage in dialogue to seek a mutually acceptable way forward on the Cyprus issue.

46. I urge the parties to put sincere efforts towards exploring options for sustainable energy cooperation in and around the island that may benefit all parties, and refrain from taking action that could increase tensions. I wish to reiterate that natural resources in and around Cyprus should benefit both communities and constitute a strong incentive for the parties to pursue mutually acceptable and durable solutions to disagreements related to natural resources.

47. While underscoring the importance of the work of the technical committees and the positive impact of confidence-building measures for trust-building between the two communities, I believe that only genuine progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful, results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement will reassure Cypriots and the international community that a peaceful and shared future on the island truly remains possible. I have maintained contact and dialogue with the parties, as have my senior advisers at United Nations Headquarters and during visits to the island, and my Deputy Special Adviser, and we will continue to do so in the coming period. In these efforts, I remain guided by relevant Security Council resolutions that have established United Nations parameters.

48. I would like to thank the partners once again, including the European Union and the World Bank, that have continued to provide support for the work of both United Nations missions in Cyprus, UNDP and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, and have contributed to the implementation of confidence-building measures. Lastly, I would like to thank my Deputy Special Adviser, Colin Stewart, and the personnel serving in my good offices mission in Cyprus for the dedication and commitment that they have brought to their work.

Annex I

Written update by the Greek Cypriot leader to the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary-General, pursuant to and in accordance with UNSCR 2674 (2023)

This submission is made in response to the encouragement in UN Security Council Resolution 2674 (2023), to “*the leaders of the two communities to provide written updates every six months to the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary-General on the actions they have taken in support of the relevant parts of this resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement, ...*”.

The present update includes all developments relevant to the effort to resume the peace process in the framework of the Good Offices Mission of the United Nations Secretary-General. References to communities are without prejudice to the Republic of Cyprus as a Member State of the United Nations and references to UNFICYP are made without prejudice to the Republic of Cyprus as the host country of the Force.

I. Efforts to resume the peace process

As the newly elected President of the Republic of Cyprus and leader of the Greek – Cypriot community, I wish, from the outset, to reaffirm my unwavering commitment to the peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem on the basis prescribed by relevant UN resolutions, the UN Charter, the High Level Agreements and my readiness to fully preserve and uphold the acquis of the negotiations and the body of work, that has been accomplished up until the closure of the Conference on Cyprus in Crans Montana, which comprises the agreed basis of bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, the convergences achieved on all negotiating chapters and the six points presented by the UN Secretary-General.

It is my firm belief that a solution on the long-standing and mutually agreed basis of a bizonal bicomunal federation with political equality as prescribed in the relevant resolutions, constitutes the only viable and sustainable path ahead that can ensure the vital interests of Cyprus and all Cypriots and would be to the benefit of all involved in the Cyprus problem as well as for the security and stability in the wider region of the Eastern Mediterranean. This parameter acquires even greater significance against the backdrop of the current international geopolitical landscape.

Unfortunately, efforts for the resumption of the Cyprus peace process continue to be impeded by the policy of Turkey and of the Turkish Cypriot side to reject the agreed basis of a solution of bizonal, bicomunal federation. During the reporting period we have unfortunately witnessed a continuation of this policy as demonstrated through positions for “sovereign equality” and “equal international status” which essentially advocate for a “two-state” solution.

In the context of the same policy, the Turkish side continues to refute the proposal for the appointment of a UN Secretary-General’s Envoy with the task to facilitate the efforts in the framework of the UN’s mandate as prescribed by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

Despite the imperative need for all parties to do their part to ensure a conducive environment, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side have also been proceeding unabated with their illegal actions as well as threats of further violations in Varosha, including the further expansion of their illegal works and incursions in the fenced-off area and along its beach front, the initiation of “pilot cases” for further property

exploitation, further construction with a view to pursue the macroeconomic development and further interventions in public areas and buildings, in disregard of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the repeated calls by the UN Security Council to cease violations and reverse unilateral actions.

We have also witnessed continued efforts in pursuit of the international upgrading of the secessionist entity, following on from the decision by the Organisation of Turkic States to amend its statute in order to permit the accession of entities and to grant the status of observer to the illegal secessionist entity in the occupied part of Cyprus. This decision is contrary to international law and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, in particular 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), which consider the declaration of the so called “trnc” to be legally invalid and call on all states not to recognise and not facilitate in any way the aforementioned secessionist entity.

In the same vein and in the context of its efforts to create new *fait accompli*, to undermine the prospects for a solution and to pursue the upgrading of the secessionist entity, the Turkish Cypriot side has put forward a demand for the conclusion of a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the UN in sharp contrast with the legally binding principle that such agreements are being concluded only between the UN and the governments of UN Member States that host peacekeeping operations; in this case the Republic of Cyprus as enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Resolutions.

On the ground we continue to be faced with repeated attempts of incursion into the buffer zone in a number of hotspots along the Turkish Forces ceasefire line, thus risking to further undermine efforts for a conducive environment but also to alter the basis upon which the process is taking place and to bring about the solidification of the status-quo.

At the same time, Turkey continues to upgrade its military capabilities and infrastructure in the occupied part of Cyprus, a policy entailing grave risks for Cyprus but also for peace and stability in the wider region of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The illegal exploitation of properties in the occupied part of Cyprus belonging to Greek Cypriot displaced persons who were forced to flee following the Turkish invasion of 1974, has also continued unabated, contrary to fundamental principles of International Law and relevant rulings by the European Court of Human Rights in a multitude of cases. Apart from the flagrant illegality of such actions, this constitutes yet another attempt to establish new facts on the ground and further undermine the prospect of a solution.

Despite this negative background, being fully conscious of the need to overcome the stalemate and to create conditions conducive to constructive dialogue, I remain focused on doing my part in order to enable developments in the direction of revitalising the process of negotiations and the prospect for a comprehensive solution.

Within this context, at my initiative, even before the official assumption of my duties, I have met with the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, on February 23, 2023, under the auspices of the United Nations, at the residence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the UN protected area in the buffer zone. During this meeting, I expressed my immediate readiness to engage in good faith in the efforts to reinvigorate the prospects for a resumption of negotiations and to do everything in my capacity to contribute to a positive climate, including by refraining from negative public rhetoric and blame games. I have also proposed the holding of a social dinner with the Turkish Cypriot leader at a mutually convenient time and I continue to look forward to his positive response. My proposal to hold a meeting with

Mr. Tatar, during USG DiCarlo's visit to Cyprus, was also met by a negative response on behalf of Mr. Tatar.

Heeding the call of the UN Secretary-General and of the UN Security Council, including in its latest resolution on Cyprus, I stand ready to immediately proceed with the appointment of a UNSG Envoy, in line with the longstanding UN practice in the context of the Good Offices Mission. In the meantime, I welcome the decision by the UN Secretary-General to assign a high-ranking official of the UN Secretariat with the role of liaising with all involved as part of the effort to find a breakthrough. I express my appreciation for the recent visit by Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo to Cyprus in March 2022, following on from the visits by Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča to Cyprus in April, July and November 2022. These visits have been instrumental in highlighting the message that the UN Secretary-General continues to be firmly committed to providing his good offices to support the effort to create conditions conducive for the reinvigoration of negotiations and for the prospect for a comprehensive solution.

It is my firm belief that post elections in TK, coupled with other factors, there is a window of opportunity for the resumption of negotiations and this window of opportunity must be seized swiftly and broadened. In order to maximise this window of opportunity, I have submitted a proposal aimed at creating win-win solutions and generate a positive agenda for all involved. With this in mind, I am seeking an enhanced role on behalf of the European Union, not only at the technocratic level once the negotiations have resumed but also at a high political level during the current stage of trying to resume negotiations. This initiative derives from the fact that the EU has the toolbox and can provide tangible incentives for all involved. It also reflects the indispensable role played by the EU over the years, in the efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem, including in reaching numerous important convergences and its continuous support for various confidence-building measures. My initiative does not in any way question nor substitute the leading role of the UN and the Good Offices Mission of the UNSG but, on the contrary, it is intended to support, facilitate and reinforce the UN in their efforts to break the deadlock and to resume the effort for a solution.

At the same time, I stand ready to explore, to identify and to utilize other factors that can be catalytic in this regard.

Against this backdrop, I wish to highlight the critical importance, especially at this sensitive juncture for the UN to call on Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leadership to refrain from additional provocations and violations, both on the ground, in particular in Varosha but also in the maritime zones of the Republic of Cyprus. Of equal importance is the need to remain firm and unwavering with regard to the goal of reunification as the only viable path ahead, as well as on the need to uphold the long established agreed basis of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my strong determination to spare no effort in pursuit of a breakthrough that would lead us to a resumption of the negotiations and achievement of a solution on the basis described above. I earnestly hope that all involved will engage in a spirit of good will towards this end, seeking to address the legitimate sensitivities and concerns of both communities, which I adamantly believe can be addressed under the agreed framework, and endorsing a new paradigm of pursuing win-win solutions that serve the indispensable need for a new era of peace, prosperity, security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

II. Effective mechanism for military contacts

Given the need to defuse tension, we are prepared to discuss the establishment of a mechanism for military contacts, between the opposing forces in Cyprus, facilitated by UNFICYP.

Even more so, taking into account the continuous violations of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, in Varosha, the obstructions and interference on behalf of the Turkish occupation forces to the ability of UNFICYP to perform its duties, and the continuous upgrading of Turkey's military infrastructure in the occupied part of Cyprus.

In this direction, we have presented a proposal already in December 2019, outlining a framework for a mechanism for military contact between the opposing forces, namely the National Guard and the Turkish occupation forces, at the level of their Commanders, facilitated by UNFICYP at respective level, in accordance with its mandate, as prescribed by the UN Security Council Resolution 186 (1964).

With a view to further facilitating the effort for the establishment of the military mechanism we have also proposed the appointment by the respective Commanders of the opposing forces, of focal points that will comprise the mechanism along with a representative of UNFICYP at the respective level.

III. Committee on Missing Persons

The work of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus remains a fundamental aspect of the peace process and therefore, the support of all parties is indeed considered a *conditio sine qua non*.

In this regard, we would like to stress once more the importance of access to information from relevant archives of countries – in particular Turkey – and organisations that had a military or police presence in Cyprus in 1963, 1964 and 1974, thus rendering the Committee more effective.

Turkey has the obligation to exercise due diligence and provide information from its archives in good faith, to help determine the fate of missing persons in Cyprus. Access to military archives would *inter alia* provide information regarding primary locations of burial of missing persons, as well as secondary locations given that a great number of remains were relocated, rendering the efforts of the Committee extremely difficult.

It is also imperative for the Turkish Cypriot side to engage more constructively and to contribute towards addressing the existing imbalance in the ratio of identifications of missing persons which is currently 48.8% for the Greek Cypriot missing persons and 59,3% for Turkish Cypriot missing persons.

IV. Technical Committees

The Technical Committees continue their work, aiming to alleviate the daily life of people from the adverse effects of the *status quo*, within the framework of their terms of reference as agreed between the leaders of the two communities since 8 July 2006, under UN auspices. Within this framework, their work constitutes an integral part of the peace process and is inextricably linked with the overall effort for a solution to the Cyprus problem on the agreed basis as defined in relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

In full recognition of the important role of the Technical Committees, I affirm my commitment to provide them with all necessary support in order to facilitate their work in line with their mandate as I have had the opportunity to convey to the Greek Cypriot co-chairs and members of the Technical Committees in a meeting I had with them on 24 April 2023.

At the same time being fully aware of the importance women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the peace process, I intend to ensure, through imminent additional appointments, that the Greek Cypriot membership of the Technical Committees comprises of an equal number of men and women.

While during the reporting period, the Technical Committees continued to undertake a number of positive initiatives further building on the achievements they have accomplished, regrettably, there have also been numerous cases of their work being increasingly hampered, as a result of the overarching philosophy of the Turkish Cypriot side, including through efforts to derail the Technical Committees towards becoming a vehicle for the promotion of a model of cooperation between "separate administrations". This approach has led to delays, postponements and in some cases setbacks on a number of projects, in particular those that have the most potential to contribute towards a more conducive environment and subsequently towards the strengthening of the prospect for a solution and reunification.

The most indicative example concerns the Technical Committee on Education where despite repeated calls from our side, the UN and international partners, the Turkish Cypriot side has yet to reverse the decision it took in October 2022 to suspend, on the basis of unjustified allegations, its participation in the award-winning peace education project "Imagine". It should be underlined that since its first launch in October 2017, "Imagine" has reached thousands of students and hundreds of teachers and is widely recognised as having made a very significant contribution to the promotion of a culture of peace and reconciliation. We call for this decision to be reversed, for the project to be fully restored and for the removal of all the impediments put by the Turkish Cypriot side to the work of the Committee.

Despite the challenges outlined above, work has continued on other issues, albeit at a slower pace than desired. To this end, the Technical Committees continued to benefit from the crucial support provided through the renewed Support Facility funded by the European Union.

Upcoming events and initiatives include, inter alia, a networking event aiming to bring together artists and academics from the two communities to be organised by the Technical Committee on Culture, exploration of ways to further facilitate crossings of people and interaction between the two communities by the Technical Committee on Crossings, continuation of the extremely important work for the restoration of cultural monuments and sites, by the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage.

The Technical Committee on Gender Equality has continued its work on the implementation of the recommendations included in the Action Plan for women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace process. In this context, it has organised on 9th May a seminar during which, women from both communities who have been involved in previous negotiation rounds shared their experiences and perspectives. The Committee members also had the opportunity to jointly exchange views with Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo during her recent visit to Cyprus, in the context of the opening of a photo exhibition organised by the UN on the contribution of women in the Cyprus settlement talks over the years.

The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters continues the discussion on ways to further advance trade on the basis of the Green Line Regulation.

Taking into account the need to advance economic interaction it should be noted that much work remains to be done to ensure that trade works in both directions, bearing in mind in particular, existing obstacles in trade from the Government -controlled areas to the non-Government-controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus, in order to address the current imbalance of 1:5 with regard to the value of trade originating from the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot community respectively. Another positive development following actions of the Government is that Turkish Cypriots residing in the non-government-controlled areas are now able to obtain bank accounts on the basis of the EU Payment Accounts Directive 2014/92/EU in commercial banks operating in the Government-controlled areas. The Committee is also working on ways to enhance and further highlight economic cooperation between the two communities. Worth mentioning in this context, not least due to its importance from a trade and environmental perspective, is the proposal for the recycling of Electrical and Electronic Waste, on which implementation has been pending for several months in anticipation of the green light from the Turkish Cypriot side. The Committee has also finalised a proposal for a bi-communal Internship Scheme on which we also look forward to a positive reply from the Turkish Cypriot side.

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters has maintained a well-functioning channel for exchange of information regarding criminal activity through the Joint Contact Room (JCR). The Committee, also organised on 31st May 2023 a seminar on domestic violence, involving experts from both communities, with an emphasis on issues such as prevention and victim support.

The Technical Committee on Health has continued its exchange of information relating to infectious diseases including epidemics and dangerous mosquito species. It has also facilitated a positive response by the Republic of Cyprus to a Turkish Cypriot request for the provision of certain medicines while efforts are also underway to facilitate the transporting of specific veterinary medicines to the Turkish Cypriot community.

Following the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria in February this year, whose devastating impact also had tragic consequences for the Turkish Cypriot community, the Technical Committee on Crisis Management initiated a discussion relating to earthquake awareness and response. In this context, under the auspices of the Technical Committee, a meeting was organised on the 11 May with the participation of experts in the fields of geology, civil engineering and emergency response. Moreover, in view of the summer season, the Committee also organised a constructive meeting with a view ensure the necessary coordination and effective response by the two communities in cases of wildfires. On 5 May 2023, we responded to a request of the Turkish Cypriot side, to contribute to the effort for the extinguishing of a wild fire in the non – Government controlled areas, an example which had yet again manifested the importance of island-wide planning and action, in Cyprus.

Finally, the Technical Committee on the Environment has maintained a steady output of work while undertaking regular visits to areas of environmental interest in order to record needs and formulate proposals. A number of proposals are underway, relating to the Geological Heritage of Cyprus, the Environmental Innovation Challenge Competition, the Protection of Vultures as well as the agreed project for the protection and preservation of Carob trees.

Annex II

Actions taken by the Turkish Cypriot Side in support of the relevant parts of the Security Council Resolution 2674 (2023)

I have the pleasure to inform the esteemed Members of the Security Council on the developments that occurred after the report of the Secretary-General on his Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus of 3 January 2023 (S/2023/6).

First and foremost, our struggle for the reaffirmation of our equal inherent rights, including sovereign equality and equal international status, has started to find ground. In this reporting period, I attended the extraordinary summit participated by the Heads of State of Member States of the Organization of Turkic States in Ankara, Türkiye. Moreover, the Legislative Assembly of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) became an Observer Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States. Also, the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce became an Observer Member of the General Assembly of the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Such positive steps towards the reinstatement of our equal inherent rights will help the restoration of the political equilibrium between the two equal Sides and contribute to the preparation of the conditions needed for solving the sixty year old dispute in our Island. I underline that the Cyprus issue can only be solved on the basis of the inherent equality of the two Sides. The Turkish Cypriot People are as sovereign as the Greek Cypriot People, and the status of our State cannot be lower than that of the Greek Cypriot State. We expect respect for our rights.

The illusion I have described in my previous contribution, which is the unlawful claim of the Greek Cypriot Side to represent the whole Island, has unfortunately continued to be sustained with the help of the international community. This is the prime obstacle preventing an agreement in Cyprus. I would like to reiterate the reality that the Greek Cypriot Side has no authority or jurisdiction to act on behalf of or to represent the Turkish Cypriot People, nor does it have jurisdiction or sovereignty over the TRNC or the buffer zone. Years of stalemate has proven that the continuation of this illusion will only contribute to the sustenance of the unacceptable status quo, ironically created by Security Council resolution 186 of 1964. It is high time to dispel this illusion and help the two Sides solve the Cyprus issue on the basis of their equal inherent rights and the factual realities on the ground.

My People continue to suffer from the dire consequences of the unacceptable status quo. The UN organization was established with the aim of preventing future conflicts, maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development, and upholding international law. The continuing ill-treatment of the Turkish Cypriot People today through the hijacking of their treaty based constitutional rights and the resultant unjust restrictions applied on them is in blatant violation of the principles on which the UN is founded. The Turkish Cypriot People have been held hostage to the consequences of a wrongdoing through no fault of their own. This decades-long injustice must come to an end and the inhumane isolation imposed on my People from all walks of life must be lifted.

Through violence and usurpation the 1960 partnership Republic of Cyprus has been turned into a 100% Greek Cypriot state. This being the case, equality, facts on the ground and the needs of sustainable peace on the island dictate the only realistic solution to be on the basis of sovereign equality and equal international status, and the building of a structured cooperative relationship between the two existing States in Cyprus. With the acceptance of this basis as the common ground by the Greek Cypriot leadership, I am ready to start a new, formal negotiation process and to solve

the 60-year Cyprus issue even before 2024. I have also shared this commitment with the Under-Secretary to the Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo during her visit to the Island on 15 March 2023.

We cannot continue to be in a permanent conflictual relationship with each other. To prepare the ground for settlement and a cooperative relationship, I put forward last July six equality based cooperation proposals that would benefit the two Sides, the Island of Cyprus and the region as a whole. These proposals would have also contributed to the building of interdependence and the culture of co-existence. We are still awaiting a formal response to my proposals, now from the new Greek Cypriot leader.

For the same purpose, I have taken new initiatives and put forth two additional proposals during this reporting period.

My first proposal is aimed at enhancing economic activity between the two Sides that has, to date, remained limited. I proposed the opening of the first ever crossing point exclusively for commercial activities in Haspolat/Mia Milia to facilitate the timely crossing of all commercial vehicles, including buses, taxis, and rental vehicles. The practical benefits stemming from this concrete proposal, which I conveyed through my Special Representative, are numerous - addressing the problem of overcrowding, congestion, and delays at the existing crossing points; increasing the volume of trade; facilitating the crossing of tourists without delay to name a few. Moreover, such an opening will yield immediate mutual financial benefits, as well as increased interaction and interdependence, all contributing to the building of trust. I would like to call upon the international community to lend their support to the realization of this proposal.

Immediately after the election of the new Greek Cypriot leader, we held an informal acquaintance meeting which was hosted by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative at his official residence in the buffer zone on 23 February 2023. This meeting came in the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes that occurred in Türkiye in which we have lost two Turkish Cypriot high-school volleyball teams, their teachers, some parents, and other citizens who were at the time visiting Türkiye. This devastation prompted me to propose to the Greek Cypriot Side a joint earthquake preparedness mechanism as natural disasters compel us to be ready to respond quickly and have a structure in place through which effective communication and cooperation can be activated. Following the positive response of the Greek Cypriot Side, six experts from each Side held their first meeting on 11 May 2023 towards this objective. I am looking forward to the establishment of an effective mechanism for this purpose.

At this reporting period, I would like to convey a positive, yet symbolic development regarding transition to green energy. With the Greek Cypriot Side, we have managed to agree to build a photovoltaic park in the buffer zone. As a first step, a pre-feasibility study will be conducted with the participation of three experts from each Side and an international company. I look forward to a positive report from the experts, which, I hope, will in turn pave the way to cooperation on interconnectivity to the EU grid, via Türkiye, consequently increasing the capacity to generate solar energy on both Sides.

Technical Committees

I look upon the Technical Committees as an essential bottom-up tool for cooperation and equality based coexistence. Towards this goal, I instructed my team to focus on concrete projects that are mutually beneficial and produce tangible outcomes that touch upon the daily lives of both peoples on the island. The participation of relevant officials from both Sides in Technical Committees is essential if these committees are to be effective.

The Technical Committee on Health has continued to focus on emerging health challenges with potential impact on both Sides and require effective cooperation to resolve. Currently, the Committee is working on a joint project for vector control as a fundamental approach to preventing vector-borne diseases.

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage has continued its conservation work on archaeological and religious cultural heritage structures on both Sides of the Island. The projects at the Orunda Mosque, Maroni Mosque, Tuzla Bath, Ayios Synesios Church, Ayios Antony Church, as well as Soli and Vuni archaeological sites have been completed during the reporting period.

The Technical Committee on Environment is continuing to update the content of its website which is intended to be a platform for experts from both Sides to access and communicate their projects and exchange views and best practices. The Committee has also agreed to implement a pilot project for the pruning and protection of carob trees at Variseia-Şirinköy and Süleymaniye-Selemanı villages in the buffer zone.

Following the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye, and the acceptance of my earthquake preparedness proposal by the Greek Cypriot leader, six experts from each Side; composed of two seismologists, two civil engineers and two search and rescue officers respectively, held their first meeting, with the participation of the Co-Chairs of the Technical Committee on Crisis Management, to cooperate and plan for the seismic analysis of the island (North and South) based on which the building standards of both Sides could be improved and an emergency search and rescue mechanism developed.

The Technical Committee on Crisis Management also focused on creating an effective communication and joint operations mechanism to respond to man-made and natural disasters, including wild fires. The Committee is currently working on a protocol to codify a pragmatic cooperation mechanism needed for this purpose.

The Turkish Cypriot Co-Chair of the Technical Committee on Broadcasting proposed the implementation of a project to increase awareness about the impact of energy consumption in telecommunications on the environment, promote the use of green energy as a sustainable alternative and encourage relevant stakeholders to adopt green energy solutions.

The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters continued its work on enabling bank transactions between the banking systems of the two Sides; increasing the variety and volume of trade of processed food from the TRNC which continues to remain symbolic; and crossing of commercial vehicles from the TRNC, all of which are pending due to the blockages of the Greek Cypriot leadership.

It is with deep disappointment that the Greek Cypriot Side retracted from their decision on the exchange of worn-out Euro banknotes concluded after many years of negotiation by the Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters.

During the reporting period, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality organized a seminar on 9 May 2023 as part of the Action Plan on ways to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in an eventual settlement process in Cyprus, which was endorsed by the two Leaders on 15 January 2022.

The two speakers, a woman member of the negotiating team from each Side, shared their experiences in the past processes, and emphasized the indispensable representation and necessity of meaningful participation of women in political life, including the Cyprus issue.

The Technical Committee on Crossing Points continued their discussions on addressing the ongoing congestion at the crossing points, with particular focus on

Metehan/Ayios Demetios. In this context, both Sides exchanged their respective plans aimed at increasing the number of lanes and immigration officers. As pointed out earlier, additionally, I proposed to open the first ever crossing point exclusively for commercial vehicles at Haspolat/Mia Milia.

A drawing and video contest on cultural monuments was completed successfully by the Technical Committee on Culture. The Committee will also organize the “Connecting Arts” event, which will bring together artists and those involved in arts from both Sides, scheduled for 30 June 2023.

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters organized a seminar on “Increase of domestic violence and child abuse during the pandemic” on 31 May 2023. The Committee continued its successful cooperation in handing over suspected criminals and the exchange of information on crime-related matters in a timely manner. A new police officer was immediately appointed to replace the retired Turkish Cypriot police officer in the Joint Communication Room.

The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Affairs has kept up its efforts to increase public awareness regarding the rights of the elderly.

The work of the Technical Committee on Education can no longer be used as a tool by the Greek Cypriot Side to conceal the dark side of their educational system which promotes hatred, enmity, extremism, and xenophobia at this day and age. Experience has shown that the continuation of business as usual in this Committee will only serve the maintenance of the despicable practices of the Greek Cypriot Side and endanger the future of the Island of Cyprus.

Disruptive Effect of the Greek Cypriot Education System

Textbooks that promote hatred and enmity against the Turkish Cypriot People continue to be used in Greek Cypriot schools with the permission of their leadership. Such poisoning of young minds through education has a disruptive spillover effect on peaceful coexistence, not only today but also for the future.

The international community has to take an active stance to expose this grave situation and press the Greek Cypriot leadership for change.

The Unhelpful Role of Third Parties

Upon his election, the Greek Cypriot leader, in an attempt to veil his intransigent vision, embarked on a desperate attempt to involve the EU in the engagements of the two Sides.

In 2004, EU has violated its own membership criteria to unlawfully admit the Greek Cypriot Side as a member without the consent of the co-founding partner, Turkish Cypriot Side, and to this day continues with its unjust stance to treat the Greek Cypriot Side as the sole “government”. The Turkish Cypriot Side does not consider the EU, which has become part of the problem, to be an honest partner nor an impartial actor.

The Cyprus issue is on the agenda of the UN and any eventual settlement process is to be conducted under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. Any attempt to change this established rule or involve any party other than the three Guarantors is strictly subject to the mutual consent of the two Sides.

This period was also marked by stepped up efforts of the Greek Cypriot Side to enhance its military build-up and armament. Sale of lethal weapons and attack helicopters, conclusion and implementation of military “partnership agreements” and conducting military drills with the Greek Cypriot Side serve nothing but the further militarization of the island and the further distancing of the two Sides. The

destabilization efforts of the Greek Cypriot Side with the assistance of third parties will leave us no choice but to reciprocate and to take the necessary measures to counter such threats.

I would like to call upon those who engage in military matters with the Greek Cypriot Side to reconsider the concrete negative repercussions of these actions on the Island, as well as peace and stability in the wider region.

The Committee on Missing Persons

Despite the agreement of all three Members of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) to proceed with exhumations of the Atlılar/Aloa mass grave that was reached last January, the Greek Member of the CMP has retracted from this agreement right before the planned excavations started.

Because the problem remained unresolved, I stepped in and called the Greek Cypriot leader to convey to him my expectation that exhumation takes place as planned without any further delay, and that we do not let political considerations overshadow CMP's important humanitarian work, which is to bring closure to the affected families through the return of the remains of their missing relatives who have been waiting for years for exhumations to start in the case of Atlılar/Aloa.

I also expressed my readiness to the Greek Cypriot leader that I was ready to visit the CMP Anthropological Laboratory with him and would be prepared to issue a joint statement to express our support for the activities of CMP.

Sadly, no progress has been made on this highly humanitarian issue to date.

In this reporting period, TRNC continued to provide information to the CMP. Since the initial exchange of information at our disposal on possible burial sites in 1998, and access granted to a number of State archives, we have continued to grant access to the aerial photos dating from 1974. In the reporting period, CMP resorted to the aerial photos in 52 different coordinates in 29 different regions.

TRNC authorities have made the necessary arrangements in this reporting period as well, so as to ensure CMP's access to any suspected burial sites in the TRNC. In this context, in 2023, CMP excavated in 32 sites in the TRNC, completed excavations in 3 military areas and started an additional excavation in another military area on 24 May 2023.

Financial contributions to CMP have also continued. In addition to the financing of the Office of the Turkish Cypriot Member of the CMP, which amounts to approximately EUR 1,000,000 per year, additional annual payments are also made, EUR 75,000 in the reporting period, bringing the total monetary contributions so far to EUR 508,000. Also, the funds that are provided by the EU, which reached EUR 35,900,000, are from the funds the European Union has earmarked for the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot Side.

During this reporting period, CMP identified three additional missing persons, none of whom were Turkish Cypriot missing persons, and two Greek Cypriot missing persons, in addition to another Greek Cypriot who was not on CMP's official missing persons list.

Status of UNFICYP operations in the TRNC

The Turkish Cypriot Side made it clear that a legal framework is essential for the operations of UNFICYP within the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. UNFICYP has been operating within the TRNC with the permission of our Government as a gesture of our good-will. However, lack of a formal framework results in ambiguities and ad-hoc solutions which raise tensions and create problems

between UNFICYP and the TRNC. For these reasons, the TRNC submitted a draft agreement to the UN, which is acknowledged in the previous Report of the Secretary-General. The UN presented its own draft and currently work is ongoing between our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UN officials to find a mutually acceptable way forward.

Hellim/Halloumi

Turkish Cypriot producers can still not enjoy the benefits provided by the registration of Hellim/Halloumi, a shared traditional cheese product that belongs to Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots alike, as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) in the EU, whereas Greek Cypriot producers have been benefitting for almost two years. This injustice cannot be tolerated, yet it continues to create uncertainty to the detriment of our producers, adversely affecting 1/3 of our economy. Our expectation is for the EU to honor its promises and to ensure the Turkish Cypriot-produced Hellim/Halloumi reach the European markets soonest possible and the existing exports to third countries continue uninterrupted.

I would like to remind all concerned of the repeated warning of the UN Secretary-General that the widening of the economic gap will feed resentment and distrust between the two Sides, while exacerbating estrangement between them.

Isolation and Restrictions

The suffering of the Turkish Cypriot people as a result of the obstructionist policies of the Greek Cypriot leadership since December 1963 in the form of socio-economic restrictions and isolation continued during this reporting period. The UN and the international community have the responsibility to terminate this oppression. This human rights violation is more than a concern and is a reality that needs to be resolved. During this reporting period, the Greek Cypriot hostile policy continued in all walks of life, including in cultural, academic and sports events, in the right to travel abroad, communication with the outside world, as well as trade relations with other countries.

Hydrocarbons

The co-owned hydrocarbon resources continue to be an area of contention. My proposal of 1 July 2022, which continues to be on the table, has the potential to benefit both Peoples, and also to contribute to peace, stability and welfare of the region. My expectation from the new Greek Cypriot leader, as well as the relevant coastal states and stakeholders, is to seize this opportunity that has a potential for a win-for-all outcome.

Maraş

The Greek Cypriot claimants continued to resort to the European Court of Human Rights-sanctioned Immovable Property Commission (IPC) concerning properties located in the closed part of Maraş. The increase in the number of applications from the Greek Cypriot former inhabitants reaching 460 this period clearly illustrates the endorsement of our Maraş opening policy, despite the Greek Cypriot leadership's oppressive policies towards its own citizens. IPC is in the process of evaluating these applications according to its internationally-sanctioned legislation.