

**Speech of H.E. Dr. Susanne Bachfischer**  
**Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Cyprus**  
**At the occasion of the presentation of her credentials**  
**To His Excellency Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, President of the Republic**  
**of Cyprus**  
**20 May 2024**

Excellency,

It is both an honor and a privilege for me to convey to your Excellency the very best wishes of the President of the Republic of Austria, Mr. Alexander van der Bellen, for your personal wellbeing, as well as for a peaceful future and prosperity for the people of Cyprus.

This year marks the 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of consular relations between our nations, testimony to the long-standing friendship that unites our countries. In 2022, we had the opportunity to celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Austria with various events and the publication of a small commemorative booklet.

Twenty years ago, on 1 May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus joined the European Union. Just one year later, in 2005, the Republic of Austria established the first resident Austrian Embassy in Nicosia placing emphasis on the fact that - due to our mutual membership in the European Union - we have been tied together closer than ever before in our history. To the benefit of both our countries, our already very good relations have further improved since then.

The mutual understanding and collaboration between Austria and Cyprus in various international fora serve as an excellent example of the spirit of like-minded countries, guided in their policies by complementary orientation and reciprocity. We are grateful for the support we have received over the last years in this respect, most recently on the candidature of Dr. Pamela Rendi Wagner for the post of director of the European Center of Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

This ongoing cooperation in multilateral fora give evidence to the fact that both our countries are aware of and respect each other's sensitivities and concerns. This is especially true with regard to overcoming the existing divisions on the island. Let me reiterate and assure you that Austria continues to stand by Cyprus.

Austria was also one of the first countries that participated in the United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus, with a continuous presence for over 50 years. More than sixteen thousand young Austrian soldiers honorably fulfilled their duties under the banner of UNFICYP, of which three of them paid the ultimate price for their bravery.

The Republic of Austria is committed to further deepening these already strong ties between our two countries. In 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed enhancing our cooperation in the field of digitalization, and this year a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of education could be added. Without doubt, there is room for further agreements in other areas, which we can jointly explore.

But also, our societies profit from and contribute to our closeness. One factor are the more than fifty- five thousand Austrian tourists per year, who choose Cyprus as their holiday destination. Another, the various Austrian companies, which offer their expertise and services regarding sewage facilities, desalination plants, renewable energy as well as the construction of highways.

Let me assure you that I am greatly honored by the opportunity to continue deepening our bonds of friendship in the coming years and enhancing our cooperation for the benefit of both the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Austria.