

**Remarks by H.M. King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands at the joint press
conference with the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nikos
Christodoulides**

Thank you very much, Mr President, and what a pleasure it is to be paying a state visit to beautiful Cyprus. Now, I remember well our first meeting at the Huis ten Bosch Palace just over a year ago. Back then, we discussed the unique position of Cyprus as the most southeasterly point in the European Union.

Your country is a cultural crossroads and a bridge to the Middle East and North Africa. A beacon that represents Europe in the Eastern Mediterranean. Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian territories, and Egypt are your neighbours. You understand the issues at play. You are aware of the many complex challenges, including the need to keep migration flows under control. You are doing your utmost to contribute to stability, security, and mutual understanding in the region. Those efforts are immensely valuable both to the Netherlands and the whole of Europe. Peace and security are fragile. That is why we cherish our friendship with you and to work together to promote freedom, democracy, human rights, and good governance.

During our visit, we will also be reflecting, as you said, on your country's turbulent history and its tragic division in 1974. So many families still bear the scars to this day and the emotions run deep. Our hearts go out to everyone who is still living with the effects today. Dialogue is essential for the future of everyone in Cyprus.

The Netherlands supports the United Nations (UN) process aimed at achieving lasting solutions. It is a hopeful sign to see that members of the different communities are themselves taking steps to get to know and understand each other better.

The Home for Cooperation, located in the buffer zone, is a place where young Cypriots from both sides of the Green Line can discover how much they have in common. We look forward to visiting the centre tomorrow and to all the other items on the programme of our visits. Once again, Mr President and Madam, thank you very, very much for your hospitality.