

ANALYSIS

JUNE 2014 NO: 7

THE LAST CHANCE FOR A UNITED CYPRUS: NEGOTIATIONS FOR A FEDERAL SOLUTION

FURKAN ŐENAY • MEHMET UŐUR EKİNCİ



THE LAST CHANCE FOR A UNITED CYPRUS: NEGOTIATIONS FOR A FEDERAL SOLUTION

FURKAN ŐENAY • MEHMET UŐUR EKİNCİ

With contributions by
ZEYNEP SARIBAŐ

Translated by HANDAN ŐZ
Original Title:

BİRLEŐİK KIBRIS İŐİN "SON ŐANS": FEDERAL ŐÖZÜM MÜZAKERELERİ

COPYRIGHT © 2014 by SETA

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Design and Cover : M. Fuat Er

Layout : Ahmet Özil

Printed in Turkey, Istanbul by Turkuvaz Matbaacılık Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2014

SETA | FOUNDATION FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

Nenehatun Caddesi No: 66 GOP Çankaya 06700 Ankara TÜRKİYE

Phone:+90 312.551 21 00 | Fax :+90 312.551 21 90

www.setav.org | info@setav.org | @setavakfi

SETA | İstanbul

Defterdar Mh. Savaklar Cd. Ayvansaray Kavşağı No: 41-43

Eyüp İstanbul TÜRKİYE

Phone: +90 212 315 11 00 | Fax: +90 212 315 11 11

SETA | Washington D.C. Office

1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1106

Washington, D.C., 20036 USA

Phone: 202-223-9885 | Fax: 202-223-6099

www.setadc.org | info@setadc.org | @setadc

SETA | Cairo

21 Fahmi Street Bab al Luq Abdeen Flat No 19 Cairo EGYPT

Phone: 00202 279 56866 | 00202 279 56985 | @setakahire

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	8
BACKGROUND	9
THE PRESENT STATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS	13
VIEWS OF THE TWO SIDES IN CYPRUS	16
OTHER ACTORS	20
CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING AHEAD	23

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mehmet Uğur Ekinci

Received his B.A. in International Relations and his M.A. in History from Bilkent University. Having attended doctoral level courses at The Ohio State University and Bilkent University, he completed his Ph.D. in Politics and International Studies at SOAS, University of London. Among his research interests are contemporary Balkan politics, European politics, domestic-international linkages, Ottoman and Republican foreign policy and political history.

Furkan Şenay

Furkan Şenay completed his undergraduate in Political Science and European Studies at Istanbul Bilgi University and he is an MA candidate in the IR department of Istanbul Bilgi University. Şenay has been an intern in SETA DC and Cairo offices and he joined various projects in UK, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Balkans and the Middle East. His research interests include Turkish Foreign Policy, Turkey - EU relations, European Studies, Europe - Middle East relations.

ABSTRACT

The Cyprus question, which loomed in the second half of the last century and gradually turned into a chronic problem, has deeply affected not only the lives of those living on either side of the island, but also Turkish foreign policy. The more the Turkish and Greek peoples of the island grew apart culturally and politically, the more it became more difficult to find a solution to the issue. As a result, long years of negotiations between the sides have remained inconclusive.

In recent years, the two sides have made remarkable progress in finding a UN-backed solution based on a bi-zonal and bi-communal federal state. Following a large number of rounds of talks, which were held under the auspices of the UN since 2008, the sides signed a historic agreement in February 2014, and direct negotiations are still in progress. On account of recently changing political and economic dynamics in the South Cyprus Greek Administration (SCGA), Greek Cypriot politicians have also been giving support to the positive attitude that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) has shown towards a federal solution since early 2000s. There appears to be a growing interest in the international community in Cyprus, which is situated at a key location for the transport of the natural gas to be extracted from the newly-explored sources in the Eastern Mediterranean. As it did for the Annan Plan earlier, Turkey exerts serious diplomatic effort for the resolution of the Cyprus issue as well. Meanwhile, due to the failure of many similar attempts in the past, the general opinion of the international community is that the ongoing negotiation process is the “last chance” for a united Cyprus.

This analysis will outline political aspects of the current negotiations in Cyprus, examine the positions of the actors directly or indirectly involved in the issue, and assess the present and the future of the resolution process.

Due to the failure of many similar attempts in the past, the general opinion of the international community is that the ongoing negotiation process is the “last chance” for a united Cyprus.

INTRODUCTION

A new stage has been reached today for the re-establishment of political union in Cyprus after nearly 50 years of division. The likelihood of a federal solution in the near future seems to be high with mutually positive attitudes of both sides towards settlement alongside mediation efforts of international actors.

The current situation is unfavorable for both parties on the island. Turkish Cypriots have suffered a lot from international isolation and their suffering will continue as the problem persists. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) has not been recognized by any country except Turkey, and has survived to date with Turkish political and economic support. As a result, Turks on the island have been exposed to international sanctions as well as political, economic, and socio-cultural isolation for years. As a result, Turkish Cypriots have been more eager for a fair resolution and the reunification of the island since the beginning of the 2000s.

As for the Greek Cypriots, despite the international recognition as the legitimate representative of the island, they have no control over the north, yet the properties of many Greeks remain in the north, on the Turkish side. Furthermore, Turkey does not recognize

the SCGA, to the disadvantage of Greek Cypriots. Establishing economic and trade relations with Turkey, whose foreign trade and investment figures have remarkably increased in recent years thanks to its political and economic stability, can definitely help the SCGA to overcome the current crisis. This is actually why the SCGA has been soliciting Turkey to open its ports to the Greek Cypriot vessels; yet Turkey refuses to do so as it does not accept the SCGA as a legitimate government.

Continuation of the Cyprus problem has been causing complications for Turkey as well. While Turkey has made considerable progress towards full membership in the European Union (EU), the dispute in Cyprus remains one of the biggest obstacles to Turkey's EU bid. The accession of the SCGA, which Turkey refuses to recognize, to the EU in 2004 has complicated the situation even further. With Greek Cypriot membership, the normalization of relations between Turkey and the SCGA has virtually become an accession requirement for Turkey. The Cyprus question is thereby blocking Turkey's accession talks.

The discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean has put Cyprus on the front burner in recent years. In the near future, Cyprus will not only be able to extract and market natural gas found in its territorial waters, but also turn into a corridor for the transportation of relatively vast resources in the territorial waters of the Levant. The strategic importance of Cyprus for Europe, which is in need of alternative energy sources, has increased accordingly. The continuation of the Cyprus dispute, however, limits the SCGA's options for international cooperation on energy. Turkey does not approve of the SCGA being the sole decision-making body on the island when it comes to the use of resources belonging to the entire island and to the sharing of the energy revenues. The island's exclusive economic zone, the borders of which were determined by the SCGA without discussing with either Turk-

ish Cypriots or Turkey, is also an issue of dispute. Normalization of relations will facilitate and expedite the steps to be taken in the energy field. The economic depression in the SCGA and the pressure of the international community for a settlement on the island positively affect the attitudes towards reconciliation.

The Turkish and Greek Cypriot governments have reached an agreement over the outlines of a federal settlement, which is supported by the international community and can provide a “win-win” situation for all the involved parties. However, there are still disagreements regarding the contents of a potential solution. More importantly, decades of mutual doubts and suspicions on the island make it more difficult for the sides to meet each other halfway and to overcome the disagreements about the details of the solution. For this reason, both sides still sometimes make pessimistic statements regarding the ongoing process, while some opposition parties, especially in the Greek part of the island, continue to object to the agreed outlines of settlement. Under these circumstances, questions regarding when the negotiations will come to an end, how the document will be finalized, and, most importantly, what the decisions of the sides will be at the end of the popular vote remain unknown.

A better understanding of the present stage of the Cyprus dispute and the settlement negotiations requires some understanding of the historical background of the Cyprus question as well as of the current political and economic conjunctures in Cyprus and its region. This study, after presenting a general overview of the recent history of the Cyprus issue, will discuss the course and status of the negotiations, the attitudes of the political actors in the island regarding the issue and its solution and the interest and involvement of the international community in the Cyprus negotiations today. It will conclude with an overall assessment, some proposals, and predictions for the future.

BACKGROUND

The State of Affairs until the 2004 Referendum

The end of colonial administration after the Second World War created a power sharing dispute in Cyprus like it did in many parts of the world. When Britain decided to leave Cyprus, there were a number of different suggestions regarding the future of the island. Whereas Greek nationalists launched an organized movement to unite Cyprus with Greece (enosis), Turkish Cypriots defended the idea of partitioning the island. On the other hand, the international community leaned towards the idea of formation of a single state where Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots would live together. Finally, in the London and Zurich Agreements signed in 1959, a decision was reached for the establishment of an independent Republic of Cyprus and the protection of the rights of both communities living on the island. This state was officially established on August 16, 1960. The executive power consisted of a Greek Cypriot President to be elected by the Greek Cypriot community, a Turkish Cypriot Vice President to be elected by Turkish Cypriot community and a 10-member cabinet, members of which included seven Greek Cypriots and three Turkish Cypriots. Votes of some of the Turkish Cypriot representatives were needed for parliamentary decisions. The President and the Vice President were granted veto power on foreign policy, defense and security related decisions. The founding agreements also granted Britain, Greece and Turkey the right of guarantorship according to which these states would be able to intervene unanimously or unilaterally if the independence or the constitutional order of the island was violated.

Turkey was thus able to prevent the annexation of Cyprus by Greece through an international agreement and the security and the rights of Turkish Cypriots were guaranteed, at least on paper. However, the nationalist Greek Cypriots who desired to achieve enosis were regarding the Republic of Cyprus as a stepping-stone in line with this pur-

Colonial powers coming to an end with the WWII brought a power and communion issue in Cyprus like it did in many parts of the world.

pose. For that matter, it soon became clear that the two communities in this newly established state could not live in harmony. President Archbishop Makarios III who had the desire for unification of Cyprus with the mainland Greece, proposed amendments in 13 articles of the Constitution in 1963 to reduce the influence and impact of Turkish Cypriots on the politics and the administration of the island.¹ Following the objections of Turkish Cypriots to possible regulations, the fanatic/extremist Greek Cypriot organization EOKA (National Organization of Cypriot Struggle), which had been active in pursuance of enosis since the 1950s initiated acts of violence targeting Turkish Cypriots. The attacks that took place in Nicosia on December 21, 1963, in particular, went down in history as the “Bloody Christmas”. After these attacks, the Turkish Cypriots clustered in certain regions of the island, and the two communities became virtually divided. Upon the increase of attacks by Greek Cypriots targeting the regions populated with Turkish Cypriots, Turkey prepared to intervene as a guarantor state, but faced a stern warning from the formerly US President Lyndon Johnson. The UN tried to settle down the situation by sending a small group of peacekeeping force (UNFICYP) to the island. However, the divided state of the island, tension and occasional clashes continued. Greek Cypriots applied economic sanctions against that Turkish Cypriots who had withdrawn to their enclaves.²

1. For the 13 constitutional articles that Makarios requested amendments for, see <http://www.brt.gov.nc.tr/haberler/haber/sagmenu/belgeler/13madde.htm>

2. Andrew Borowiec, *The Mediterranean Feud* (Praeger, New York:1983), pp. 155-6.

After the military junta took over the government in Greece in 1968, President Makarios, who softened his remarks on enosis, fell out with the Greek government. Eventually, a coup designed by the junta overthrew him on July 15, 1974 and the EOKA leader Nikos Sampson declared himself the president of Cyprus. The Turkish government, emphasizing that the constitutional regime of the island was in danger and that Turkish Cypriots would be subject to a massacre, took action for an international intervention in the island. The Turkish government first sought for a joint intervention with another guarantor state Britain; however, Britain refused active involvement in the intervention or the use of British bases on the island. Thereupon, Turkey launched the Peace Operation in Cyprus on the morning of July 20, 1974.

The guarantor states met after the two-day initial stage of the operation. Turkey, arguing that the two groups could no longer live together on the island, asked for the formation of a two-zone federal structure as opposed to Greece and Greek Cypriots who insisted upon the status quo of the pre-military coup period. As the talks headed to a dead-end, Turkey resumed the offensive operation and took 37 percent of the island under control. Thus, the current borders in Cyprus were formed. Turkish Cypriots settled in the north of the island and advocated the establishment of a federal state in Cyprus believing that it was impossible to live together with Greek Cypriots. The declaration of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus in 1976 followed as a step in this direction. Greek Cypriots rejected the federal solution and the talks headed to a dead-end. The situation led to the establishment of TRNC as an independent state in 1983. The TRNC was recognized only by Turkey. The international community, however, continued to recognize the Greek Cypriot administration (SCGA) as the official representative of the island although the SCGA had no actual ties with the north of the island. Turkey provided continuous political and economic support to the TRNC for the sur-

vival of the Turkish Cypriots who were isolated by the world. Moreover, the settlement of many citizens of the Republic of Turkey in the island balanced in the least the shrinking population of the Turkish Cypriots due to the emigration since the events of 1963.

The SCGA applied for a full membership for the European Community (EC) in 1990. The SCGA President of the period Glafcos Clerides announced that their priority from there on would be European Union (EU) membership rather than a solution in the island. As the SCGA started membership negotiations in 1995, reactions of Turkey to this membership remained weak, partly due to the Customs Union agreement signed between the EU and Turkey in the same year,

The Annan Plan

In the late 1990s, the formerly UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched mediation to find a ground for a comprehensive solution between the sides in Cyprus. The main frame of this process was determined by a series of UN Security Council resolutions, and the leaders of the two sides launched direct and indirect talks. Following a few years of on-and-off negotiations, the UN Special Envoy to Cyprus Álvaro de Soto announced the Annan Plan, which envisaged a blanket political solution, on November 11, 2002. Even though the sides had not accepted the plan, a month later, during the Copenhagen Summit, the EU gave the SCGA a membership date as May 1, 2004. In the conclusion document of the summit, it was stated that the sides should conclude a comprehensive settlement in advance of the membership and that in the absence of a settlement, the application of the *acquis* to the northern part of the island shall be suspended.³ In other words, the TRNC would be practically left outside the EU.

The EU apparently gave the Turkish Cypriots an economic and political opportunity for integration with the world; an opportunity that if missed, they would pay a heavy price. In the meantime, Turkey, as the only country recognizing and supporting the TRNC, was also positive about the way of the Cyprus question being handled, considering that the issue set the biggest obstacle to Turkey's membership negotiation date to be given by the EU. The winner of the 2002 elections the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government supported the Annan Plan in order to speed up the EU accessions of both Turkish Cypriots and Turkey.

Problems in the negotiations increased with the election of Tassos Papadopoulos, who was against the Annan Plan, as the new president of the SCGA in February 2003. Similarly, the TRNC President Rauf Denktaş adopted a negative attitude towards the basics of the plan. Under these circumstances, the sides remained at the table only by the pressures of the international community and Turkey. At the end of the same year, the Republican Turkish Party (CTP) backing the Annan Plan came to power in the general elections held in the TRNC; and upon Turkey's request, Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Talat represented the Turkish Cypriots in the settlement talks instead of President Denktaş. As a result of the accelerated pace of talks that continued until late March 2004, the final draft of the plan was prepared for popular votes in the island. The final document, dated March 31, 2004, prescribed, in a nutshell, a Federal Republic of Cyprus consisting of two constituent states of equal status. According to this, each constituent state would have its own constitution in addition to the Federal Constitution. The President and the Vice President would be elected from the representatives of the two communities and rotate every 20 months. The Federal Parliament composing of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies would exercise the legislative power. The Senate would be composed of an equal number of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The Chamber of Deputies would be elected

3. Council of The European Union, "Presidency Conclusions", Copenhagen, December 12-13, 2002, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/73842.pdf

by simple majority. Decisions of Parliament would require the approval of both Chambers by simple majority. The Supreme Court, which was to settle the issues between the two sides, would comprise an equal number of judges from each constituent state along with three non-Cypriot judges. Turkey would completely withdraw its military presence on the island by 2018 at the latest, and many villages populated with Turkish Cypriots would be gradually left to the Greek Cypriot administration.

The plan was submitted to popular votes in the TRNC and the SCGA on April 24, 2004. With a turnout of about 88 percent on both sides, 65 percent of Turkish Cypriots voted “Yes” for the Annan Plan as 76 percent of Greek Cypriots said “No” to the plan. Therefore, over five years of negotiations turned inconclusive, and the Republic of Cyprus officially became a EU member on May 1, 2004.

Although the Annan Plan was a fairly balanced settlement proposal considering the demands of both sides, the results of the referendum were rather determined by the political and economic climate of the time. While the more nationalists among the Turkish Cypriots approached the terms and conditions with suspicion, for the majority of Turkish Cypriots the EU membership, the removal of international sanctions and a better life were the determining factors. On the other hand, Greek Cypriots were not under any political or economic pressure to accept the Annan Plan since the EU membership of the SCGA, as the only representative of the island, took form long before the referendum. Therefore, the Greek Cypriots, who found the Annan Plan unsatisfactory on some issues such as security (in other words, possible intervention by Turkey), properties, the status of settlers from Turkey, and the legal basis of the settlement (in other words, the legitimacy of the 1974 Peace Operation by Turkey), rejected the plan.⁴

4. For a public survey on the justifications of Turkish and Greek Cypriots' votes in the referendum, see Alexandros Lordos, “Rational Agent or Unthinking Follower? A Survey-Based Profile Analysis of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Referendum Voters”, <http://www.cypriospolls.org/RationalOrUnthinking.pdf>

After the Referendum

The rejection of the Annan Plan, which was the closest attempt for the reunification of Cyprus, by Greek Cypriot votes and the EU accession of the SCGA as the sole representative of the island created a great deal of disappointment in the Turkish Cypriot community. Moreover, despite Brussels' proposed support for integration and economic development of the Turkish Cypriots with the international community,⁵ the international isolation of the Turkish Cypriots continued on a large scale. After the referendum, although the EU provided the Turkish Cypriots with financial support in the fields of law, trade, health, food, energy, environment, and offered opportunities to Turkish Cypriot students and teachers to have education in the EU member countries,⁶ the Turkish Cypriots continued to receive real support in these fields from Turkey.⁷ Nor has the EU's support been sufficient to develop the private sector in the TRNC, which is isolated from global economy. As a result, the public sector has remained as the most decent option for work and many of the qualified youth who could not find enough jobs in the government preferred to emigrate to Turkey and other countries.

The official entry of the divided Cyprus to the EU negatively affected Turkey's EU membership process as well. Following the EU enlargement in 2004, Turkey, by signing an additional protocol with the EU, committed to apply all the requirements of the Ankara Agreement to the new members. This, however, implied the official recognition of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey; therefore, by issuing a declaration concurrently, Turkey announced that its signing of the protocol did not amount to any form of recognition

5. “Commission Proposes Comprehensive Measures to end Isolation of the Turkish Cypriot Community”, *European Commission Press Releases Database*, Brussels, July 7, 2004.

6. “Closer to the European Union: EU Assistance to the Turkish Cypriot Community”, doi 10.2794/5373.

7. Tozun Bahcheli and Sid Noel, “The Quest for a Political Settlement in Cyprus: Is a Dyadic Federation Viable?”, *Publius*, v. 44, no: 2 (2014), p. 13.

of the Republic of Cyprus, and pending a comprehensive settlement on the island, the position of Turkey on Cyprus would remain unchanged.⁸ In response, the EU issued a counter-declaration underlining that Turkey must apply the Protocol fully to all EU Member States.⁹

Turkey, commencing EU membership negotiations in 2005, spent considerable diplomatic effort regarding the Cyprus question in order the accession process to proceed without interruption. While the Turkish government supported the confidence-building initiatives of the TRNC towards the Greek Cypriot side, Abdullah Gül, the foreign minister of the period, offered opening Turkey's sea ports and airports to Greek Cypriots in exchange for the lifting of trade restrictions on the Turkish Cypriots, the TRNC's inclusion in the EU market, and the permission for the Turkish Cypriots to participate in international cultural, social and sports activities.¹⁰ The SCGA, however, rejected these steps taken by Turkey for a settlement. Upon these inconclusive attempts, the EU Foreign Affairs Council suspended eight of the total 35 negotiation chapters after Turkey declined to open its ports and airports to the SCGA vessels as part of a commitment Turkey made in the additional protocol. After Nicholas Sarkozy was elected president in France, France practically brought Turkey's membership process into a halt by blocking a total of 11 chapters.¹¹

The election of Dimitris Christofias, the AKEL leader, as the president of the SCGA in 2008 created positive reflections on bilateral relations. Christofias agreed to open the Ledra (Lokmacı) Barricade, which had not been removed despite the insistence of the Turkish side,

for mutual pedestrian traffic.¹² TRNC President Talat and SCGA President Christofias resumed the settlement talks based on the two-zone and two-community principle. The UN Special Envoy to Cyprus Alexander Downer mediated the talks and the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon attended the negotiations at times. With the support of the international community including the Turkish government, significant progress has been made in this process, which continued intermittently with ups and downs due to various reasons such as differences of opinion between the sides and the EU term presidency of the SCGA¹³. The talks finally evolved into a critical point in the early 2014 when the parties signed a joint declaration.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

The Joint Declaration and On-Going Negotiations

The TRNC and the SCGA released the joint declaration on February 11, 2014.¹⁴ The sides underlined in the document that the status quo is unacceptable and stated that the leaders expressed their determination to resume structured negotiations in a results-oriented manner for a settlement based on a bi-communal and bi-zonal federation of a united state of Cyprus with political equality. According to the joint document, the united Cyprus, as a member of the UN and of the EU, shall have a single, international legal personality and a single sovereignty, which emanates equally from Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. All citizens of the United Cyprus shall also be citizens of either the Greek Cypriot constituent state or the Turkish-Cypriot constituent

8. "Türkiye'nin Kıbrıs'la İlgili Deklarasyonu, July 29, 2005", http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_nin-kibris_la-ilgili-deklarasyonu_-29-temmuz-2005.tr.mfa

9. See "AB Konseyi Karşı Deklarasyon Metnini Kabul Etti", İKV web site.

10. "Kıbrıs Konusunda Türkiye'nin Yeni Açılımı", Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/kibris-konusunda-turkiye_nin-yeni-acilimi-tr.mfa.

11. "Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne Katılım Müzakerelerinde Son Durum", [http://www.ikv.org.tr/images/upload/data/files/muzakerelerde_son_durum\(1\).pdf](http://www.ikv.org.tr/images/upload/data/files/muzakerelerde_son_durum(1).pdf)

12. "Liderler anlaştı, barikat yıkılıyor", *ntvmsnbc.com*, March 23, 2008.

13. For information about the negotiations, see. <http://www.uncyprustalks.org/>

14. For the original text and Turkish translation of the text, see. "Ortak Metin'in Türkçesi Kıbrıs Postası'nda", Kıbrıs Postası, February 11, 2014.

state.¹⁵ The parties also are to commit to efforts to implement confidence building measures and act on a solution-oriented manner for the unification. When the leaders freely reach a comprehensive agreement, it will be put to separate simultaneous referenda.

After the parties signed the joint agreement setting the framework of the future negotiations and the future federal state, cross-talks were held through the visits by TRNC Chief Negotiator Kudret Özersay to Athens and by SCGA Chief Negotiator Andreas Mavrogiannis to Ankara. The goal was set to have confidence-building direct talks with two guarantor states.

According to the joint document, the united Cyprus, as a member of the UN and of the EU, shall have a single, international legal personality and a single sovereignty, which emanates equally from Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

The sides are currently carrying out in-depth and extensive negotiations on six main topics:

1. Power sharing: The fundamentals on which the federal government shall be built and how the sides shall have a share in the administration;
2. EU Membership: The adaptation of the north to EU standards;
3. Economy: To determine joint economic policies;
4. Properties: Adaptation of the property regime with the EU *acquis communautaire* and settling property disputes originated during the Turkish intervention 1974;

15. The Greek Cypriot side, which does not recognize the TRNC as a state, opposes to the expression of 'constituent state' as 'founding state': "Yeni çözüm, yeni plana ve yeni bir haritaya dayanacak", *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, May 12, 2014. This expression is instead interpreted as one of the two units of the federal state.

5. Land: Lands in the Turkish side that shall be left to their former Greek owners;

6. Guarantorship: Whether or not the guarantorship rights of Turkey, Greece and Britain shall be rearranged.

On these matters, first a screening process was completed in early March 2014, and then the sides have proceeded to the "substantial negotiations" phase.¹⁶ In the "substantial negotiations," the goal is to outline a comprehensive agreement through concrete proposals, counter-proposals and bridge-building suggestions without getting too much into details. If this phase is completed successfully, in the final stage, the sides will determine what exactly they will give and take.¹⁷

Although not among the main negotiation topics, the return of Varosha (Maraş), a military zone presently closed to civilian settlement, to the Greek Cypriot side and the re-opening of the area to settlement is one of the matters frequently visited in discussions today. Both the SCGA and the international community suggest Turkey to make a gesture of goodwill by re-opening Varosha. For instance, the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Council, as part of confidence building measures, called on Turkey to pull back its troops from Cyprus¹⁸ and hand over Varosha to the UN. Similarly, the US Ambassador to the SCGA John Koenig stated that leaving Varosha to Greek Cypriots could be a "game changing" step.¹⁹ There have been news reports on that the US reached a decision to finance a work project on the re-construction of the closed region Varosha based on the "green development model" and is waiting for a convenient time to make the announcement.²⁰ On the other hand, the TRNC government emphasizes that the re-opening of Varosha requires negotiations on many sub-

16. "Kıbrıs'ta 'özlü müzakereler'", *Aljazeera Türk*, May 13, 2014.

17. "Kıbrıs'ta üç aşamalı yol haritası", *haber.kibris.com*, May 1, 2014.

18. Mehmet Levent, "Maraş Bütünlüklü Çözümün Parçası mı, Güven Yaratıcı Önlem mi?", *Afrika Gazetesi*, March 7, 2014.

19. Jean Christou, "Return of Varosha could be 'game-changer' says US ambassador", *Cyprus Mail*, March 27, 2014.

20. "ABD Maraş için finansman hazırlığında", *kibrisgenctv.com*, February 23, 2014.

jects and even a discussion about the proposal will result in months of arguments, and talks on the issue will detract from the core of reunification negotiations. Therefore, the issue should be opened to discussion at a later time.²¹ Turkey also believes that re-opening Varosha is a secondary issue and should be evaluated within the scope of a comprehensive settlement.

Energy Opportunities

One of the most important reasons behind the positive atmosphere over the last few years regarding a settlement in Cyprus is the hydrocarbon reserves that have recently been explored in the Eastern Mediterranean –i.e., in the territorial waters of Cyprus, Israel and Lebanon. Therefore, Cyprus has become a key player for the export of these resources to Europe in particular. According to the latest calculations, the Aphrodite reservoir in the south of Cyprus has approximately 120 billion cubic meters of natural gas.²² If the reserves in the Israeli territorial waters are included, the total volume of estimated natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean increases to 1 trillion cubic meters.²³

It is obvious that no matter how much the SCGA and Israel will be willing to transfer the natural gas to be extracted from their own territorial waters, failure to reach a settlement on the Cyprus question is going to hinder these activities. This is because, settling the questions such as how the Turkish and Greek Cypriots will share the revenues of gas transit and how Turkey, Greece and the SCGA will agree on each other's limits of authority in the Aegean and the Mediterranean are all directly related to the future of the Cyprus question. The SCGA has rejected the offers made so far by Turkey and the TRNC for an equitable share of resources in the

territorial waters of Cyprus.²⁴ Advocating that both communities living on the island must benefit from the resources of Cyprus, Turkey objects to the unilateral control of the resources in the continental shelf of Cyprus by the SCGA and to the attempts made by the SCGA for cooperation with third countries in the field of energy. Disagreements on these issues and oil and natural gas explorations in the north and south coasts of the island create tensions among Turkey, Greece and the SCGA at times. Besides, there still has not been an agreement among these three countries about the borders of the exclusive economic zones.

Under the present circumstances, it is envisaged that natural gas may be transferred from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe via Cyprus in the following ways:²⁵

1. A pipeline from Cyprus to Greece: This project is advocated by the Greek public gas corporation DEPA. While offering obvious political advantages as well as the direct linkage to EU networks; therefore, by-passing Turkey, this would be a very water-deep and very long (over 1000 km) pipeline with a very high cost to the Greek Cypriot government.

2. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) option: Transferring liquefied natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe by tankers: LNG certainly requires very expensive investments. Still, the SCGA government is already considering this option in case of a delay in the settlement in Cyprus.²⁶

3. A Pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey: A pipeline from the Aphrodite field landing on southern Cyprus that would traverse the island to the north and end in Turkey can be easily integrated to Turkey's pipeline infrastructure lead-

21. Sevil Erkuş, "Varosha should be part of comprehensive settlement, Turkish Cyprus says", *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 18, 2014; "Özersay: Statüko Çatırdıyor", *Havadis Gazetesi*, March 31, 2014.

22. Elias Hazou, "Gas estimates lowered", *Cyprus Mail*, December 2, 2013.

23. Micah D. Halpern, "Israel: Now a Gas Exporter", *Huffington Post*, February 28 2014.

24. For instance, see. "Doğalgaz krizine KKTC'den yeni öneri", *cnnturk.com*, September 25, 2011; Nuh Yılmaz, "Kıbrıs'ta kesin çözüm için Rumlara 3 alternatifli plan", *Star*, March 28, 2013

25. Michael Emerson, "Fishing For Gas and More in Cypriot Waters", *CEPS Policy Brief*, no. 2 (July 2012).

26. Murat Utku, "Çözüm yoksa boru hattı da yok", *Aljazeera Türk*, February 21, 2014; "Important decisions' on LNG terminal", *incyprus.com.cy*, March 10, 2014; "Doğalgaz şirketi Güney Kıbrıs'ta arazi arıyor", *Kıbrıs Postası*, April 2, 2014.

ing to Europe. While involving less costly investments than the other two options, this scenario would depend on a significant progress in the settlement of the Cyprus issue. Even if a complete settlement is not reached, building up political trust between the sides in the island may bring this option into discussion, and the construction of a pipeline to connect the south and the north of the island may create a constructive effect for the unification.

Among these options, since a pipeline from Israel to Cyprus and to Turkey will have the lowest cost, a more positive willpower has been recently exhibited by the SCGA for a rapprochement with Turkey considering the big impact of the global economic crisis in the south. In early 2013, the head of the Greek Cypriot Orthodox Church Archbishop Chrysostomos II stated that if it is proper for the national interest, it would be proper to sell natural gas via Turkey.²⁷ After Nikos Anastasiades was elected president in February 2014, he repeatedly expressed that this option would be for the interest of everyone, accelerate the settlement in Cyprus, and reinforce stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.²⁸ Besides, Israel wishes to cooperate with Turkey on the transfer of the energy resources to the West while taking steps to iron out bilateral relations with Turkey. The European and US companies are trying to be involved in this business as well. All these create an appropriate international environment for a settlement in Cyprus.

Despite the positive attitude of Anastasiades towards a bi-zonal and bi-communal settlement, the SCGA government has continued unilateral natural gas explorations in its self-declared territorial waters as it accelerated the works to have partnerships in the energy field with the regional countries. In late 2010, the SCGA and the Israeli government reached an agreement on the Exclusive Economic Zones

(EEZ) and they continue to have talks and cooperation about exploration and use of natural gas. Constructing a pipeline between the two countries, with the attempts of the SCGA government in particular, and setting up a land-based or floating LNG plant in Cyprus are among the options that Cyprus and Israel are considering in talks.²⁹ The SCGA is also having contacts in the energy field with Egypt, the country that drastically has changed its foreign policy following the coup.³⁰ To these attempts, the SCGA seeks support of the Mediterranean countries such as Greece and Italy.³¹ Still, the steps to be taken by disregarding Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean bear economic and political risks; for this reason, the sides act timidly in this matter. Furthermore, Turkey delivers a message to international energy companies that they cannot work on Turkish territory if they invest in the Greek Cypriot waters. This is also an important drawback.³²

VIEWS OF THE TWO SIDES IN CYPRUS

Turkish Cypriots

Integration with the international community is the number one priority for the Turkish Cypriots who have been living in economic and political isolation for 50 years. Turkish Cypriots look positively to the settlement believing that the integration would be possible if the negotiations end with a solution. The TRNC President Eroğlu, the government partners (Republican Turkish Party-United Forces and the Democratic

27. Selim Sayarı, “Doğalgazımızı Türkiye satsın”, *ntvmsnbc.com*, January 28, 2013.

28. For instance, see. “Kıbrıs’tan Türkiye’ye boru hattı sürprizi”, *Hürriyet*, February 18, 2014

29. “Cyprus-Israel deal on hydrocarbon secrecy”, *Cyprus Mail*, April 29, 2014.

30. “Rum kesimi, Yunanistan ve Mısır arasında enerji toplantısı” *Habertürk*, October 23, 2013; “Mısır Petrol Bakanı Güney Kıbrıs’ta...”, *Kıbrıs Postası*, February 8, 2014.

31. “Rum kesimi, Yunanistan ve Mısır arasında enerji toplantısı”, *Habertürk*, October 25, 2013.

32. “Türkiye’den, Kıbrıs’ta Petrol ve Gaz Arayan Şirketlere Rest!”, *haber365.com*, May 19, 2012; “Türkiye, İsrail ve Rumlara diz çöktürdü”, *Star*, February 12, 2014.

Party-National Forces) and the main opposition the National Unity Party (NUP) all agree on a federal partnership as the way it is stated in the agreement document.³³ However, the TRNC government wishes to reach conclusion in the negotiations on details without any loss of time and not to miss this opportunity created by today's positive atmosphere considering that the decades-long negotiations have not yielded any concrete outcome for the Turkish Cypriots. The TRNC leaders stress in their statements that the sides should decide gives-and-takes as soon as possible and that the agreement should be put into referenda in 2014.³⁴

The TRNC officials indicate that they support a bi-zonal and bi-communal political structure whereby the federal government will enjoy external sovereignty and the two constituent states will have vast domestic autonomy.³⁵ The point that they see as a sine qua non for the settlement is the existence of the Turkish Cypriot population and territory as a unique whole in the prospective state. To this end, the general opinion among the Turkish Cypriots is not to return large areas of territory to Greek Cypriots, even to return a smaller piece of land compared to that designated in the Annan Plan.³⁶ Similarly, the TRNC opposes the Greek Cypriot demand about the return of those who settled in Cyprus and became Turkish Cypriot citizens back to Turkey. Again, about the Maraş (Varosha) issue which Greek Cypriots keep on the agenda, the TRNC requests the discussion of this particular issue upon the completion of the negotiations on basic issues. President Eroğlu does not entertain the idea of the Varosha question to be opened to

discussion at this stage. Key civil society organizations in Turkish Cypriot territory also disapprove the inclusion of Varosha among the confidence building measures.³⁷

Albeit the progress in the negotiations is a historic opportunity, the palpable slowdown in talks especially after the parties signed the joint agreement, and negative remarks by Greek Cypriot politicians lower the expectation of reaching a solution between Turkish and Greek Cypriots in the short run. An indication is the statement issued by the CTP leader and Prime Minister Özkan Yorgancıoğlu that if the negotiations under the UN auspices remain inconclusive, alternative solutions may be found.³⁸ Again, the main opposition NUP announces on the one hand that they wish to have a settlement, but on the other hand there seems to be pessimism in the party stemming from the general conviction that Greek Cypriots will never be in favor of a settlement.³⁹

Although the mainstream political actors in the TRNC favor a federal settlement on condition of the protection of security and fundamental rights of Turkish Cypriots, some cautious, or even opposing, voices also exist. These may be roughly categorized in three groups:

First, there are occasional warnings coming from political parties. Some members of the main opposition NUP believe that the government tends to make more compromises than necessary and this weakens the hands of Turkish Cypriots.⁴⁰ Similarly, the UCP drawing attention to the danger of the weight of the Anglo-American influence on the process, asserts that a plan failing to serve the interests of both sides in the island will not be accepted when it comes to the transfer of the natural gas in the Israeli waters to the West.

33. "Özersay: Harita ve rakamı bu aşamada müzakere etmemiz sözkonusu değil", *Kıbrıs Postası*, March 4, 2014; "Eroğlu: 'Biz de Kıbrıs'ın sahibiyiz'", *Kıbrıs Postası*, March 7 2014; "İşte CTP-BG - DP-UG Hükümeti Programı!", *Kıbrıs Postası*, September 6, 2013; "Kıbrıs'ta bir çözüm olacaktır", *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, February 27, 2014.

34. Jean Christou, "Return of Varosha could be 'game-changer' says US ambassador", *Cyprus Mail*, March 27, 2014.

35. "Bizim Var Olduğumuzu Artık Dünya Görmeli", *haber.kıbrıs.com*, February 21, 2014.

36. "Yeni çözüm, yeni plana ve yeni bir haritaya dayanacak", *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, May 12, 2014.

37. "Öncelik çözüm", *Diyalog Gazetesi*, March 10, 2014.

38. "İşte CTP-BG - DP-UG Hükümeti Programı!", *Kıbrıs Postası*, September 6, 2013.

39. "UBP'den Hükümet Programına Ret!", The National Unity Party web site; "Ertuğruloğlu: 'Nami haddini bilmesi gereken bir çocuk'", *Kıbrıs Postası*, February 20, 2014.

40. "Ertuğruloğlu: 'Nami haddini bilmesi gereken bir çocuk'", *Kıbrıs Postası*, February 20, 2014.

As a second group, it may be possible to talk about a deep-rooted bureaucratic structure in the TRNC. Many individuals in this group pander to the nationalistic sentiments of masses in order to protect their own privileges. For instance, they claim that the process called “settlement” is in fact a project of “selling the homeland”⁴¹, and that the population and land exchanges to take place following the future settlement can create an atmosphere of “immigration and misery”, comparable to a wartime environment.⁴²

The third group consists of relatively older residents believing, based on their past experiences, that the Greek Cypriots are not trustworthy and in case of living together Turkish Cypriots will face a great deal of difficulties sooner or later; therefore, they stand against the process.⁴³

Nonetheless, the widespread opinion among the Turkish Cypriots is that a settlement acceptable by the international community should be reached immediately. In addition to the practical benefits of this –such as recognition in the international community, free steps in trade and a breakthrough in tourism, it is also believed that this will create great returns in terms of democratic values, human rights and rule of law, all of which will be secured by EU membership. Those discontented with the present state of the north claim that the status-quo is a “moral and material corruption”⁴⁴ and the Turkish Cypriots will not be able to defeat their ill fortune if the attempts for reunification fail.⁴⁵ Besides, the majority of the young population who did not suffer the bitter experiences of the past link economic, justice and law-and-order issues mainly to the yet-unre-

solved Cyprus question; therefore, they support a settlement based on single sovereignty, single international identity and single citizenship.⁴⁶

Greek Cypriots

Compared to a decade ago, when the majority of the Greek Cypriots said “no” to the federal settlement in the referendum for the Annan Plan, a set of critical changes in their approach to the issue are noticeable today. Among the reasons behind this change may be the disappointment on the Greek Cypriot side that they could not gain the advantages they expected from the EU membership regarding the Cyprus question, the severe economic crisis recently in the south, and the positive political atmosphere that has occurred when the pro-Annan Plan Anastasiades was elected president in February 2013.

One of the most important reasons behind the negative approach of the Greek Cypriots (both the government and the majority of citizens) towards the Annan Plan was that the SCGA would enter the EU as the sole representative of the entire island in any case, whereas Turkish Cypriots were generally considering the unification with Greek Cypriots and accessing the EU as the only way out in economic terms. Under these circumstances, with consideration that after their entry to the EU they would have more legitimacy and influence in Cyprus-related issues, Greek Cypriots must have thought that a segregated entity within the EU may not survive long and that the Turkish Cypriots may settle for less than what the Annan Plan offered. However, the Greek Cypriot expectations failed following the EU membership. Although the Turkish Cypriots said “yes” for the settlement, they did not seek for unification with the Greek Cypriots for the sake of EU membership. Thus, Greek Cypriots’ expectations of international legitimacy fizzled out due to their own nay vote for the Annan Plan.

The impact of the financial crisis in the

41. Serhat İncirli, “Statükocuların çıkarları!”, *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, February 23, 2014.

42. Ali Tekman, “Toplum ‘muhacirlikle’ korkutarak çözümünü ‘şeytanlaştırmak’...”, *Kıbrıs Postası*, February 23, 2014.

43. Bülent Dizdarlı, “Kuşuklar ve Umutlar”, *Havadis Gazetesi*, February 26, 2014.

44. Serhat İncirli, “Hayır+Dolar=Evet”, *Kıbrıs Postası*, February 14, 2014.

45. Ali Tekman, “Toplum ‘muhacirlikle’ korkutarak çözümünü ‘şeytanlaştırmak’...”, *Kıbrıs Postası*, February 23, 2014.

46. Büşra Çakmak, “Kıbrıslı Türk gençlerinin Kıbrıs’taki çözüm önerilerine bakış açısı”, *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, February 16, 2014.

SCGA, which entered the Euro zone in 2008, has been disastrous. Under the gradually escalating crisis atmosphere, many banks have faced bankruptcy and a serious regression is felt in tourism and construction sectors in the Greek part of Cyprus since 2012. National per capita income has dropped from \$29,500 in 2009 to about \$26,000. As of early 2014, the unemployment rate among Greek Cypriots has jumped to 16.8 percent. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriots have not felt the impact of this crisis. For instance, while the Greek Cypriot economy dwindled 5.3 percent in 2013, the economy in the Turkish side grew 2.8 percent.⁴⁷ That is to say, the economic crisis in the Greek Cypriot side has in a way reduced the economic imbalance between the two communities.

Normalization in bilateral relations with Turkey takes the lead among the most critical economic benefits of a future settlement for the SCGA. The Turkish economy, which was only slightly affected by the global crisis, has maintained its stability a rigor for a long time. Foreign trade volume in Turkey swiftly recovered after the crisis and surpassed the level of the pre-crisis period. Besides, Turkey provides assistance for development and investments to peripheral countries. In this regard, the absence of direct economic and trade relations with Turkey is an important loss for the Greek Cypriots. The settlement in Cyprus will help the SCGA have access to Turkish ports, carry out trade and receive investment and foreign aid from Turkey. The water transfer project from Turkey to the TRNC to be launched this year may also be expanded to meet the water need of the south, for the benefit of the Greek Cypriots. The settlement in Cyprus, at the same time, will provide Cyprus an opportunity to transfer the natural gas to be drilled from the territorial waters of Cyprus and Israel at a lower cost, and make it a key energy hub between the East and the West in a short time. All these possible benefits must have contributed to the recent

47. "Euro bölgesinde işsizlik beklentiler seviyesinde", *Dünya*, February 28, 2014.

positive approach of the political circles in the Greek Cyprus towards the settlement.

The Democratic Mobilization Party (DISY) of the Greek Cypriot President Anastasiades, which has 56 seats in the Greek Cypriot Parliament, supports a federal solution based on the principles of one state, one citizenship and institutional and economic unity. In addition, it expects the withdrawal of Turkish troops, termed by them as "occupier", from the island on a certain timetable. The DISY leader Averof Neophytou says that a remarkable progress in the talks with the support of international actors would create a chance for the entire community in Cyprus, and Cyprus must take advantage of this.⁴⁸ The government shows sensitivity to inform the opposition and trade unions about the negotiations, and constantly takes the pulse of these circles by organizing meetings.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the Greek Cypriot government also expresses their expectations of Turkey on the issues such as the return of Varosha to Greek Cypriots and the implementation of the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Agreement for a solution.⁵⁰

Although not among the main negotiation topics, the return of Varosha (Maraş), a military zone presently closed to civilian settlement, to the Greek Cypriot side and the re-opening of the area to settlement is one of the matters frequently visited in discussions today.

Although criticizing the government in its economic policies, the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), the main opposition party,

48. "No room for grand visions in divided countries", *Cyprus Mail*, January 14, 2014.

49. "Anastasiades partilerin ardından sendikaları da bilgilendirdi", *Kıbrıs Postası*, April 12, 2014.

50. Emine Davut Yitmen, "Çözüm için karşılıklı güven tesis edilmeli", *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, April 16, 2014.

backs a settlement based on federal partnership. However, AKEL has some reservations about the joint agreement. For instance, the party criticizes the omission of the term “indivisible” in the document although it was part of the expression of “indivisible sovereignty” in the joint communique signed by Talat and Christofias in 2006. AKEL also is concerned about the breadth of authorities to be granted to the two states, which will form the Federal Cyprus.⁵¹

The Democratic Party (DIKO) led by Nicolas Papadopoulos, the son of the former Greek Cypriot leader Tasos Papadopoulos who sternly objected to the Annan Plan in 2004, adopts a nationalist and irreconcilable attitude regarding the Cyprus issue. Contesting the joint agreement, the party withdrew from the government in February 2014 on the grounds that President Anastasiades adopted an excessively compromising position and violated the agreement he had reached with the DIKO before the election.⁵² DIKO leader Papadopoulos claims that the joint agreement is an obscure document and may be easily manipulated one way or the other to the extent that even the legitimacy of the SCGA may be lost. Bringing the oil exploration activities of Turkey into attention, he also urges Anastasiades not to trust the good intentions of Turkey too much.⁵³

The Movement for Social Democracy (EDEK), which has only five seats in Parliament, does not stand against the negotiations and a solution based on a federal partnership. However, it defends that both the demographic character of Cyprus and the “colonization” and the “war crime” activities by Turkey should be considered while the settlement conditions are being set and that the lands “invaded by Turks” should be immediately returned to the Greek Cypriots.⁵⁴ As it is seen, despite the constructive attitude

of President Anastasiades, all political parties in Greek Cyprus have various reservations about the content of the on-going negotiations. Considering that Greek Cypriots substantially act in accord with the positions of the parties they supported in the referendum on the Annan Plan,⁵⁵ the situation today is not really close to draw an optimistic picture about the result of a referendum to be held in the future. Besides, some Greek Cypriot newspapers criticize President Anastasiades for ignoring both the concerns of the political parties and the advices of Greek Premier Andonis Samaras to respect national consensus and take lessons from the past experiences.⁵⁶ In addition, recent negative and unyielding remarks of Archbishop Chrysostomos regarding the Turkish demands, although he had conveyed warm messages to build relations with Turkey in the energy field,⁵⁷ raise doubts about how much support a possible agreement can receive from the Greek Cypriot community.

OTHER ACTORS

Turkey

After the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) came to office, the Turkish government overtly supported a solution in Cyprus within the frame of the Annan Plan. Although the issue of unification dropped off the agenda following the Greek Cypriot rejection of the plan, Turkey continued to back the steps for improved dialogue and relations between the two sides. Furthermore, the Turkish government also made proposals to the SCGA to ensure the lifting of embargos on the Turkish Cypriots. The reason for all this is the fact that no-solution in Cyprus was disadvantageous for Turkey both politically and economically. Turkey’s EU accession bid was

51. “40 years! End Occupation of Cyprus”, *AKEL Bulletin*, no. 38 (March 2014).

52. DIKO koalisyondan çekilme kararı aldı”, *Kıbrıs Postası*, February 22, 2014.

53. DIKO web site: <http://www.diko.org.cy/easyconsole.cfm/id/2722>

54. EDEK web site: <http://www.edek.org.cy/page.php?id=2>

55. Alexandros Lordos, “Rational Agent or Unthinking Follower? A Survey-Based Profile Analysis of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Referendum Voters,” <http://www.cypruspolls.org/RationalOrUnthinking.pdf>

56. “Anastasiades, müzakere sürecine yalnız girecek”, *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, February 9, 2014.

57. “II. Hrisostomos: ‘Kıbrıslı Türkler yüzde 25’in üzerinde toprak almamalı’”, *Gündem Kıbrıs*, April 13, 2014.

stone-walled due to Turkey's not recognizing the SCGA, Turkish businessmen were unable to engage in direct trade and economic relations with the south of Cyprus, and the TRNC needed aid and support from Turkey.

Today, one of the most important reasons behind Turkey's desire to settle the Cyprus question without losing more time is the serious slowdown in the EU membership process. As it is mentioned before, a number of negotiation chapters are already suspended by the reason that Turkey excludes the SCGA in the implementation of the Ankara Agreement.

Even though European governments, fearful of a "shift of axis" in Turkey's foreign policy have agreed to open a new chapter in 2013 after a three-year interval, an effective and productive progress in the talks still very much depends on the Cyprus question. It is expected that the EU accession negotiations that are interrupted due to the Cyprus problem will gain momentum again if a permanent solution is achieved through an agreement between the sides in Cyprus and if the relations between Turkey and the Greek Cypriots are normalized.

Energy opportunities in the Eastern Mediterranean are another source of encouragement for Turkey to support the solution in Cyprus. It is known that Israel, enriched with the largest known share of natural gas reserves in the Levant, intends to cooperate with Turkey for the transfer of natural gas to Europe. In fact, Israel has been taking steps to iron out the bilateral relations with Turkey since 2013. Turkey, aspiring to be an energy hub between Asia and Europe, positively approaches the idea of transferring the natural gas found in the Israeli waters via its territory. However, since a pipeline from Israeli waters to Turkey needs to run through Cypriot waters, this project will require an agreement with Cypriot authorities. Another settlement regarding the right of using Cypriot reserves is also required since the natural gas in the territorial waters of Cyprus will be integrated with that of Israel before being transferred to the

West. Furthermore, there are significant differences of opinion between Turkey and the SCGA concerning the limits of the EEZs. Turkey, which has not yet signed an agreement with the Eastern Mediterranean countries determining each other's zone of authority, asserts that the agreements signed by the Greek Cypriot government are against the international law, and so declares them null and void. Due to all these disputes, a sustainable energy partnership in the Eastern Mediterranean that includes Turkey primarily requires the normalization of relations between Turkey and the Greek Cypriots and, ideally, a solution to the Cyprus question.

Nonetheless, the widespread opinion among the Turkish Cypriots is that a settlement acceptable by the international community should be reached immediately.

With these considerations, Ankara has recently launched diplomatic initiatives to bring the two sides in Cyprus and Greece together for a settlement in the island. A crucial step has been taken in this direction through cross-talks following the declaration of the agreement document. For further progress in the cross-talks, Ankara has two more suggestions to offer.⁵⁸ The first is concurrent visits by the TRNC President Eroğlu to Athens and by the SCGA President Anastasiades to Ankara, as the "community leaders" in the island. The second is to have Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and his Greek counterpart Evangelos Venizelos meet the representatives of both communities in Cyprus. To this end, Turkey requests of the two ministers to meet at the Green Line and then, together with the UN representatives, pay

58. Mahmut Gürer, "Kıbrıs'ta çözüm rüzgârları esiyor", *Akşam*, March 4, 2014.

visits to the two “community leaders” in office. Through these proposals, Ankara aims to set up productive channels and cement mutual confidence of dialogue among the four parties. However, Greece and the SCGA have not opened up to these suggestions yet.

Greece

Albeit Turkish-Greek relations have largely normalized since the late 1990s, the differences of opinion over the Aegean Sea and Cyprus, as the main reasons behind the previous tensions between them, have still not been resolved. Regarding the Cyprus issue, the government of Greece has recognized the SCGA as the only legitimate authority in the island since the beginning. Today, Greek President Karolos Papoulias, Prime Minister Samaras and Foreign Minister Venizelos support a federal solution in Cyprus in order to end the “illegal Turkish occupation” and expect positive steps from Turkey even though they find Turkey irreconcilable.⁵⁹ The Greek government insists on single citizenship and single representation in the international community and defends that important decisions must be taken through referendum in the federal state. This makes it obvious that the Greek government would prefer the formation of a regime in Cyprus where the majority, i.e., the Greek Cypriots, will have the right to speak.

The International Community

As Europe is in search of alternative energy resources, the natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean increases the significance of the Cyprus issue in international politics. This is the reason why the US administration closely follows the negotiations in Cyprus and promotes a lasting solution based on the guidelines set by the UN. Recently, US Vice President Joe Biden visited Cyprus on May 22, 2014 and encouraged both parties on the island for a solution.⁶⁰ Biden vis-

ited both sides and he called the leaders to meet more often and to be more courageous to take steps to achieve solution. It is also known that during his visit to Cyprus, Biden made an effort to speed up the process through concrete steps by carrying numerous issues to the negotiation table –such as the re-opening of Varosha to civilian settlement, the opening of the Ercan Airport to international air traffic, energy cooperation, and cleaning land mines on both sides.⁶¹ After this visit, US Secretary of State John Kerry is also expected to pay a visit to the island and make attempts in the same direction.⁶² The US interest in Cyprus stems mainly from two inter-related matters one of which is the energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean and the other is Israel’s interests in this basin.⁶³ A settlement in Cyprus has strategic importance for the US government, which aims to strengthen its presence in the Eastern Mediterranean while the Syrian and Ukrainian crises are still going on. Thus the US is hoping to strengthen the ties of Turkey, Greece, Israel and Cyprus with both each other and the West, while lessening Europe’s high energy dependency on Russia. By doing as such, it will also help Israel to profit from an energy agreement with Europe. Here it should also be mentioned that the biggest partner of the energy consortium in Israel is an American company.

In the EU, a common will to pressure the sides for a settlement in Cyprus has not yet transpired mainly because the Cyprus question does not have any dimension to address the interests of the EU or the EU member states. With the full membership of the SCGA as the sole representative of the island, the EU, as an international actor, has missed the opportunity to play the conditionality card –its biggest trump card in hand– for a united Cyprus. As a result, since the referenda for the Annan Plan, the EU has refrained from either pressuring or encouraging the sides in Cyprus, and simply sufficed to de-

59. “Anastasiades briefs Samaras on efforts to launch Cyprus talks”, *ekathimerini.com*, February 7, 2014.

60. “Vice President Biden and Dr. Jill Biden to Travel to Romania and Cyprus”, *White House Statements & Releases*, May 12, 2014.

61. Ömer Bilge, “ABD’yle Maraş Pazarlığı”, *Hürriyet*, May 16, 2014.

62. “Kerry Kıbrıs’a gelecek”, *kibrisgenctv.com*, May 14, 2014.

63. İlhan Tanır, “ABD’de Kıbrıs trafiği”, *BBC Türkçe*, February 25, 2014

clare that it would support any solution agreed by the two communities. It would be early to claim that the on-going crisis between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea has brought a notable change in the Cyprus policies of the EU and member states. Nevertheless, considering that the EU has failed to develop compelling economic sanctions against Russia due to the high energy dependency on this country and that it has prioritized energy efficiency and diversity in recent meetings, the EU is expected to provide more active support to the solution of the Cyprus question in order to facilitate the transfer of the natural gas found in the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe. As the US continues to promote the solution in the island, the EU will likely support these attempts in due course.

Although it is not a political actor, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) reached a decision on May 12, 2014 that may affect the on-going negotiations in the island. In the case of *Cyprus vs. Turkey*, filed by the Greek Cypriot Government in 1994, the Court found numerous human right violations by Turkey arising out of the military operation in 1974 and ruled that Turkey should pay, in respect of non-pecuniary damage, a total of 90 million euros to the SCGA government and to the families of the Greek Cypriots displaced and died in the Karpas region during the operation.⁶⁴ Although the ECHR rulings are binding according to the international law, the implementation of the judgment in this case is still disputable since there is no similar previous lawsuit that sets a precedent: i.e., a state is held liable to pay compensation to another state that it does not recognize. In terms of political impact, the Court's decision enables the SCGA, which has argued for years that all Greek Cypriots who had had to leave the north due to the "human rights violations of 1974" must be allowed to return to their lands, to voice this argument more strongly.⁶⁵ Following the ruling, Turkey and the TRNC,

which advocate that while deciding the borders of the two zones in the federal state it is a must to recognize the fact that the Turkish side has to have sufficient borders to survive on its own, may have to exert more effort to persuade the international community in this regard.

CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING AHEAD

A vast number of negotiations for reconciliation and solution have been held in Cyprus to date; yet has not been possible to find a common ground as the sides approached the issue in a self-centered fashion, considering only what they will give and take for a settlement. In the last few years though, a relatively stable environment of dialogue has emerged. While the Turkish Cypriots, who have been carrying the burden of the high cost of international isolation, have already leaned towards a federal solution for long, the Greek Cypriots, depending in particular on the economic crisis they are facing, are following more flexible and constructive politics today compared to ten years ago. The negotiations under the UN auspices gave birth to a joint agreement; cross talks have been held among the sides, Turkey and Greece; and despite all differences of opinion the sides have remained at the table. The progress toward an agreement is remarkable compared to the earlier attempts.

Along with the progress made in the meetings held between political representatives of Turkish and Greek Cypriots in the island, the increasing number of gestures and steps for rapprochement and cooperation between the two communities is auspicious for the future of the process. To give a few examples, the first official agreement between Turkish and Greek Cypriots since 1979 came about recently when the two football federations in the island came together with the suggestion of FIFA in November 2013 and Turkish Cypriot teams were listed under the roof of the Greek Cypriot Federation.⁶⁶ As

64. For the full text of the decision, see. <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-144151>

65. Ayla Gürel and Kudret Özersay, "Kıbrıs'ta Mülkiyet ve Siyaset: Kıbrıs'taki İki Toplumun 'İki Bölgecilik' ve 'İnsan Hakları' Temelindeki Çatışması", *PRIO Cyprus Centre Report*, no. 3, pp. 20-27.

66. Adayı futbol birleştirdi", *Radikal*, November 29, 2013.

a symbolically important event, the first Easter mass in nearly 60 years was held at the St. George Exorinos Church in Gazimağusa (Famagusta) on April 19, 2014 and many Greek Cypriots from the south attended the ceremony.⁶⁷ In late April, the mayors of the Turkish and Greek parts of Nicosia opened a new sewage treatment plant, showcasing an example of a confidence building attempt.⁶⁸ Again, in a joint campaign titled “What if?” the Turkish and Greek Cypriot Chambers of Commerce call for reunification to actualize the economic potential of the island, resolve the unemployment problem and give an end to emigration.

On the other hand, the deep split between the two communities on the island is also a fact admitted by the political representatives of the sides.⁶⁹ As Tozun Bahcheli and Sid Noel observe, the unilateral attitude in each side stemming from (1) mutual distrust caused by past events, (2) political, economic and cultural segregation entrenched over time and (3) different courses the sides were directed to by the international politics, have so far prevented the solution of the problem through reciprocal compromises.⁷⁰ These negative circumstances still largely exist today. Even if the on-going arduous negotiations between the political representatives of the communities produce an agreement, the final document will eventually be put to a popular vote. This is why mutual confidence and the feeling of co-habitation must be strengthened alongside the negotiations. Otherwise, the “last chance” for a federal solution may be missed at the last minute again in the wake of a referendum.

Both the TRNC and Turkey are against further prolongation of the negotiations, in which many Cypriot and international actors have ex-

erted great effort to reach the current point of progress. In recent years, voices in the international community about finding a solution to the Cyprus issue in one way or the other have also increased. Former British Foreign Minister Jack Straw indicated in 2010 that Turkey must be part of the EU and, as the biggest political obstacle in front of this, the Cyprus question must be resolved by formalizing the status-quo should the on-going negotiations to reunite the island fail.⁷¹ Many diplomats, including the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, believe that the current negotiation process is “the last chance” and that this issue must be resolved without losing more time.⁷² Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu has also stated that if the talks failed, partition of Cyprus would be the only option.⁷³ Nonetheless, since the late 2013 the Turkish and the Turkish Cypriot governments have been refraining from mentioning alternative options in order not to harm the on-going process.

As for the SCGA, compared to the previous governments, President Anastasiades and his government act more willing and determined for the solution of the Cyprus dispute. They also appear to be aware of the price they will have to pay if they leave the negotiation table despite all encouragements by the international community, particularly of the UN. On the other hand, there are still negative views in the south such that granting to the Turkish Cypriots of a broad autonomy will damage the sovereignty of Greek Cypriots and legitimize the Turkish “occupation”. Under these circumstances, it seems that the Greek Cypriot government is torn between the international community and these naysayers in the country. By playing this “two-

67. “Historic mass in Turkish Northern Cyprus ‘like a miracle’”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, April 19, 2014.

68. Menekşe Tokyay, “New sewage plant contributes to peace in Cyprus”, *setimes.com*, May 22, 2014.

69. “Özersay: ‘Maraş güven yaratıcı önlem değil’”, *Kıbrıs Postası*, May 11, 2014.

70. Bahcheli and Noel, “The Quest for a Political Settlement in Cyprus”, pp. 2-3.

71. “UK’s straw argues for Turkey’s EU bid, says Cyprus partition may be needed”, *Dünya*, November 9, 2010.

72. “Talks are ‘last chance for solution’ on Cyprus”, *Financial Times*, November 7, 2010. Álvaro de Soto, mediating the negotiations over the Annan Plan on behalf of the UN, also believes that the division is the only way if the talks fail: Álvaro de Soto, “Can Cyprus Be Solved?” *Peace Review*, v. 24, n. 4 (2012), p. 404.

73. “Davutoğlu: Ya çözüm ya taksim”, *ntvmsnbc.com*, March 28, 2013.

level game”⁷⁴, it on the one hand tries to create a public opinion favorable to a federal solution and, on the other hand, by pointing out the opposition inside, asks from Turkey for one-sided gestures such as the return of Varosha and the lifting of the sanctions against Greek Cypriot vessels and aircrafts.

Greek Cypriots’ expectations from Turkey also find support in the international community with the claim that the negative impression and concerns in the Greek Cypriot community about Turkey may be eliminated by clear and bold steps and that it may be useful, even necessary, for Turkey to express determination and sincerity for a settlement by taking several unilateral and concrete steps. However, these steps require Turkey to radically change the position and arguments that it has maintained for years, and even if such steps may introduce to Turkey some economic and diplomatic benefits, it is not predictable today whether or not they will be sufficient to convince the Greek Cypriot community for a federal solution within the current framework. In other words, even if Turkey takes these steps the majority of the Greek Cypriots may still say “no” in the referendum to an agreement favored by Turkey and the TRNC. For these reasons, the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot governments see drawbacks in taking such steps in the directions of the Greek Cypriot demands without reaching an agreement on a comprehensive solution.⁷⁵ Indeed, a strong will and desire towards the normalization of relations with Turkey and power sharing with Turkish Cypriots has yet to materialize among the Greek Cypriot community. Therefore, such bold steps may well be regarded in the south as a compromise rather than a benevolent gesture and

thus not create a significant effect on the general views of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.

Regarding energy opportunities in the Eastern Mediterranean critically important to alleviate its economic problems, the SCGA is signaling eagerness in the subject to take action expeditiously and evaluating options including betterment of relations with Turkey. Although it is not easy to see for now whether the Greek Cypriot government, which is in contact with Greece, Israel and Egypt for cooperation on natural gas, really sees these countries as alternatives to Turkey or is bluffing to create the impression that they do not need a settlement with the Turkish Cypriots or Turkey, as the impact of the economic crisis in the SCGA fade away, it will likely bring forward the energy cooperation options that exclude Turkey.

To date, perhaps the biggest handicap in the settlement of the Cyprus question has been the lack of support by an external power. In this regard, US Vice President Biden’s travel to Cyprus in late May 2014 to motivate the sides both for a solution and energy cooperation is a critical attempt.

Especially in case that a pipeline is built, despite all its cost, between the SCGA and Greece, this, by leaving Turkey out of the transfer of the Cypriot and Israeli gas to the West, will likely to lead to new tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Since Turkey has not yet signed any bilateral agreements with the Eastern Mediterranean countries to restrict EEZs, disputes regarding the zones of authority exist even today among Turkey, Greece and the SCGA. If the economic potential of the natural gas found in the Eastern

74. The “two-level games” argument, introduced by Robert D. Putnam, claims that governments in bargaining in the international arena need to satisfy actors both inside and outside, and they generally endeavor to reach the most favorable outcome both for themselves and their countries by usually taking advantage of differences among these actors: Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization*, v. 42, n. 3 (1988), pp. 427-460.

75. “Ahmet Davutoğlu KKTC’de temaslarda bulundu: Kıbrıslı Türkler çözüm istiyoruz”, *AB Haber*, May 18, 2014.

Mediterranean is actualized with the exclusion of Turkey, serious tensions, or even conflicts, may occur on the issue. Handling the energy and Cyprus issues holistically and collectively could be useful to arrive at a long-term comprehensive understanding among Turkey, Greece and the SCGA. If the solutions of the two issues are linked to each other, both a solution to a historic problem and the prevention of serious tensions in the future may be possible simultaneously.

Considering the history of the Cyprus issue, after the ECHR's ruling against Turkey it can be expected that the SCGA will hold more strongly on their arguments on legitimacy, property and land issues, and thus adopt a less conciliatory attitude in the negotiations. In response, neither the TRNC nor Turkey will readily accept suggestions to confine the Turkish Cypriots in a non-sustainable political and social structure. Therefore, the likelihood of a deadlock in the negotiations has increased with the decision of the ECHR.

What should matter for Turkey at this point is to reach a durable political solution that will free the Turkish Cypriots from the double standards and discrimination they have been exposed to for centuries, make them feel secure internationally, and let them maintain their identity for long.

For bridging the gap between the viewpoints of the two sides, encouragements by an external actor is almost essential today. To date, perhaps the biggest handicap in the settlement of the Cyprus question has been the lack of support by an external power. In this regard, US Vice President Biden's travel to Cyprus in late May 2014 to motivate the sides both for a solution and energy cooperation is a critical attempt. The involvement

of such a high-level US official on the Cyprus dispute is significant in the current political and economic conjuncture, and not surprising at all. Obviously, the reason why the Western world cannot take a stern, determined and united position against Russia in the Ukrainian crisis is the EU countries' dependency on Russian gas. Furthermore, Russia, which already has a military base in Syria, has recently been seeking to consolidate its presence in the Eastern Mediterranean by advancing its relations with Egypt. At this point, it stands out that by encouraging the settlement of the Cyprus dispute the US both aims to contribute to the energy security in Europe and secure its position in the Eastern Mediterranean through forming a friendly bloc including Turkey, Cyprus and Israel.

Considering the special attention the US pays to this issue today, it is expectable to see that an increasing pressure for a solution on all parties involved. Such a pressure will create ambivalent reactions on the both sides of the island in accordance with each actor's political position. Today, the initial reactions to the US involvement of those in the south who have been favorable to the solution in the frame of the current agreement has been largely positive. Meanwhile, there are also others who believe that the US prioritizes its own interests and will support a solution close to the views of Turkey.⁷⁶ Similarly, while Turkish and Turkish Cypriot officials have largely welcomed the contributions of the US government to the settlement process,⁷⁷ some officials in the TRNC, including President Eroğlu, have expressed their concern that the US will impose a settlement in line with its own interests.⁷⁸ In addition, suspicions in the TRNC were augmented by the news⁷⁹ that the

76. "Μετοχές της Τρ.Κύπρου θέλει θυγατρική της Παγκ. Τράπεζας", *Kathimerini*, May 14, 2014; "Biden önlemler paketi anlaşması açıklayacak", *kibrisgenctv.com*, May 13, 2014.

77. "ABD çözümü destekliyor", *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, March 11, 2014; "Davutoğlu, Biden'in ziyaretini değerlendirdi", *Kıbrıs Postası*, May 14, 2014.

78. "Biden geliyor", *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, May 12, 2014.

79. "ABD: Kıbrıs'ta Rumların çıkarına olan statükonun korunması konusunda Rum Yönetimine güvence verdi", *AB Haber*, May 17, 2014.

US government respects the legitimacy of the Republic of Cyprus and ensures the SCGA that it will not take any steps that would damage it.

Reconciliation of the two communities respecting each other's sovereignty in Cyprus will make a significant contribution to both the prosperity level on the island and peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. As argued before, in the face of an about 50 years of disagreement between the two sides, encouragements by the international community will be crucial to expedite an agreement. On the other hand, it is also evident that a rushed settlement agreed half-heartedly as a result of external encouragement and pressure will not be sustainable in the long run. Thus, as the fundamentals of the state to be established in Cyprus are determined, similar experiences in the near history must be taken into consideration. For instance, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where three ethnic groups were brought together in the aftermath of a bloody war and tragic massacres by the international community under a flimsy state structure, a collective national consciousness has not yet formed for 20 years. Although the Muslims (Bosniaks), Serbs and Croats had lived together for centuries under the Ottoman, Austrian-Hungarian and Yugoslav states and speak almost an identical language, not only an awareness of a common society has not shaped up despite all the international incentives, but also differences among the communities are increasingly becoming permanent.

Even though the magnitude of the conflicts and massacres in Cyprus is not at all comparable to those happened during the Yugoslav Wars, the tragedies that were experienced from 1963 onwards were a reality and are still remembered. More importantly, the two communities in Cyprus have been divided since 1963. New generations do not speak each other's language. Social and cultural interactions between the two sides on the island have dramatically weakened compared to the early 1960s, while political cooperation has been even weaker. From the

1970s onwards, the two communities have developed their own state structures, which are somehow functioning even if with problems. Under these circumstances, it should be carefully pondered whether or not bringing these two societies, who have not much in common anymore other than living on the same island, together with incentives not directly relevant to the social-political life in the island (such as EU membership and energy) can indeed create a sustainable state and a social structure. This concern has also been voiced in the recent in-depth report of the International Crisis Group (ICG), which on one hand invites all the involved actors to approach the issue as constructive as possible, and, on the other hand, raises the option of a solution based on two individual states, fully integrated in the EU, rather than a united Cyprus.⁸⁰

What should matter for Turkey at this point is to reach a durable political solution that will free the Turkish Cypriots from the double standards and discrimination they have been exposed to for centuries, make them feel secure internationally, and let them maintain their identity for long. No matter how balanced and reasonable the 1959 and 1960 agreements seemed on paper, they lost their functionality within only a few years. In order for a possible settlement not to cause new complications, tensions and *faits accomplis*, it is vital for the Turkish Cypriots to live in a state structure, federal or in another form, that would ensure their autonomy and survival in political, social and economic terms. Otherwise, the conciliatory atmosphere today, which has largely been shaped by global energy politics and political economy, may evolve into a different direction under the emergence of new political and economic balances, and this may be disadvantageous for Turks representing the minority on the island.

What will happen if the negotiations do not bear fruit, or, to put it differently, if this "last

80. "Divided Cyprus: Coming to Terms on an Imperfect Reality", *International Crisis Group Europe Report*, no. 229 (March 14, 2014).

chance” is missed? As pointed out earlier, the conviction that the Cyprus issue has prolonged excessively and it is time to think of new ways to end the grievances of the Turkish Cypriots is now stronger than ever in the international community. If the on-going process comes to a halt and Greek Cypriots continue dismissing the idea of sharing power, alternative scenarios must be laid on the table and different options for the integra-

tion of Turkish Cypriots must be brought to the agenda.⁸¹ Acceptance of and attention to such options by the international community will enlarge the set of possible solutions in Cyprus and offer a broader field of negotiation.

81. TRNC chief negotiator Özersay as well defended this view in an article he published two years ago: Kudret Özersay, “Exhaustion and Time for Change,” *Peace Review*, v. 24, no. 4 (2012), pp. 406-413.

The Cyprus question, which loomed in the second half of the last century and gradually turned into a chronic problem, has deeply affected not only the lives of those living on either side of the island, but also Turkish foreign policy. The more the Turkish and Greek peoples of the island grew apart culturally and politically, the more it became more difficult to find a solution to the issue. As a result, long years of negotiations between the sides have remained inconclusive.

In recent years, the two sides have made remarkable progress in finding a UN-backed solution based on a bi-zonal and bi-communal federal state. Following a large number of rounds of talks, which were held under the auspices of the UN since 2008, the sides signed a historic agreement in February 2014, and direct negotiations are still in progress. On account of recently changing political and economic dynamics in the South Cyprus Greek Administration (SCGA), Greek Cypriot politicians have also been giving support to the positive attitude that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) has shown towards a federal solution since early 2000s. There appears to be a growing interest in the international community in Cyprus, which is situated at a key location for the transport of the natural gas to be extracted from the newly-explored sources in the Eastern Mediterranean. As it did for the Annan Plan earlier, Turkey exerts serious diplomatic effort for the resolution of the Cyprus issue as well. Meanwhile, due to the failure of many similar attempts in the past, the general opinion of the international community is that the ongoing negotiation process is the “last chance” for a united Cyprus.

This analysis will outline political aspects of the current negotiations in Cyprus, examine the positions of the actors directly or indirectly involved in the issue, and assess the present and the future of the resolution process.



ANKARA • İSTANBUL • WASHINGTON D.C. • KAHİRE

www.setav.org