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1. Cyprus Problem

On June 4, President Nicos Anastasiades and TRNC¹ Foreign Minister, Kudret Ozersay met for dinner in the south hosted by Yiannakis Moussas, the Maronite representative in parliament. The dinner was described as a private, social dinner and was also attended by the first lady of the Republic of Cyprus, Andri Anastasiades, and Mrs. Ozersay. The meeting did not sit well within the pro-solutionists on both sides of the island as both have been openly accused recently of heading towards a two-state solution. In the south, a statement issued by AKEL criticized Anastasiades as the meeting took place behind the back of Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akinci, and away from public scrutiny. In the north, Akinci's spokesperson, Baris Burcu criticized Ozersay after the latter had stated that such meetings are often more beneficial than official meetings. The meeting came to light when details and a photo were leaked to the media, sparking a furious response from Akinci, who said he had not been informed about the meeting implying

¹ The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is only recognised by the Republic of Turkey. While for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, Mustafa Akinci serves as President of the TRNC, the international community considers him the communal leader of the Turkish Cypriots. As the government of the Republic of Cyprus remains internationally recognised as the government of the whole of the island, the entire island is now considered to be a member of the European Union. However, the *acquis communautaire* is suspended in northern Cyprus pending a political settlement to the Cyprus problem (see Protocol no. 10 of the Accession Treaty).

that he was side-lined. *"The fact that no information was given to the President by the Foreign Minister before or after this meeting, means violation of state practice,"* Mr Akinci's spokesman Barış Burcu noted.

On June 5, the new TRNC prime minister, Ersin Tatar, stated that he would soon be taking new steps regarding the Cyprus problem and the economy. Highlighting the divide between himself and Akinci, he reiterated that a federal solution was no longer possible since the Greek Cypriot side understood it differently from the Turkish Cypriots. Tatar argued that the common goal with Turkey was for the north to become a "developed country".

On June 13, five suspects wanted in connection with two different murder cases on both sides of the island were exchanged at the Ledra Palace crossing point. The Pakistani national wanted for a murder case in the north was exchanged with four Georgian citizens wanted for a murder in the south. The unprecedented exchange was facilitated by the United Nations Peace Keeping Force (UNFICYP). Speaking to the BRT, Turkish Cypriot Foreign Minister Kudret Ozersay welcomed the exchange, describing it as an extremely important development. He said that the exchange had taken place as a result of dialogue with the Greek Cypriot side during the previous government's term in office. Turkish Cypriot President Mustafa Akinci expressed satisfaction over the exchange and said that despite the fact that the two sides did not recognize each other neither side should be a haven where criminals can seek refuge after committing crimes. According to an anonymous

Greek Cypriot government source cited by Cyprus Mail, there was mutual understanding between the two sides that *"crimes should not go unpunished even in such an abnormal situation."*

On June 18, Ozersay announced that the TRNC in coordination with Ankara and a team of experts will carry out an inventory study to prepare a list of movable and immovable properties in the fenced off town of Varosha, currently under control of the Turkish army. According to Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister Ersin Tatar cataloguing the properties was the first step ahead of opening Varosha. Tatar said Varosha would open under Turkish Cypriot administration and that investments would be made there. He went on to say that one of his administration's main objectives was to protect existing Turkish Cypriot rights and together with Turkey they were determined to put an end to the Greek Cypriot side's use of the status quo against them. The issue is further complicated by the fact that considerable parts of Varosha are claimed by the pious Turkish Cypriot foundation EVKAV as its property. This is disputed by the Greek Cypriots side which holds the view that all EVKAF claims over Varosha were relinquished at the end of British colonial rule.

Akinci denounced the move which he said excluded the TRNC presidency and was announced before a study could be carried out. The Turkish Cypriot leader instead suggested the opening of Varosha under UN supervision in

return for beginning direct flights to Ercan (Tymbou) airport. The Tatar-Ozersay government was also lambasted by the head of the Democratic Party (DP) Serdar Denktash over the Varosha announcement. In the south, Undersecretary to the President, Vasilis Palmas, stated that the announcement was "completely unacceptable" and only served the island's permanent partition. Varosha was abandoned by its Greek Cypriot inhabitants in August 1974, ahead of the Turkish army's advance. It has remained closed ever since. UN Security Council resolution 550 from 1984 called on Turkey to return the area under UN control and considers *"attempts to settle any part of Varosha by people other than its inhabitants as inadmissible"*.

On June 21, Akinci called on Anastasiades to take part in a five-party meeting, including the two sides and the guarantor powers, Greece, Turkey and Britain, to clarify the solution that the Greek Cypriot side is seeking to the Cyprus problem. Akinci reiterated his proposal for the creation of a bicomunal committee for natural gas, noting that there was still time to avoid additional tension and to use the issue as a field for cooperation rather than conflict. *"This committee could operate under the supervision of the UN. There are similar committees that currently operate on other matters. However, the Greek Cypriot side is running away from all forms of dialogue on the issue, only recognizing its own authorities and sovereignty. Anyone who expects us to abandon*

our political and economic rights is naïve,” he said.

According to a survey by Politis newspaper, for the first time since the checkpoints opened in April 2003, the number of crossings by Greek Cypriots in 2019 surpassed those of Turkish Cypriots. The survey which used police statistics showed that there were 1.9m crossings, excluding those at Pergamos and Strovilia which are run by the British bases, from the Greek Cypriot side until the end of May compared with 1.2m crossings from the north. In the month of May there were 182.843 crossings by Greek Cypriots at the six crossings compared with only 64.523 in the same month last year. The number of Turkish Cypriot crossings rose from 87.648 in May 2018 to 103.500 in the same month this year. The biggest factor cited for the huge influx from south to north was the devaluation of the Turkish lira, which prompted thousands of Greek Cypriots to cross in search of cheaper fuel, medication and groceries over 2018 and 2019. Fuel is reportedly 40 cents cheaper per litre in the north.

Gulden Plumer Kucuk, Turkish Cypriot member of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP), said that the Committee had been granted permission to carry out excavations in 33 locations over 30 military zones in the TRNC. She added that there was no time limit on the excavations and the Committee would decide on the time and the order in which the excavations would take place.

The head of the TRNC Department of Religious Affairs Talip Atalay led a special prayer service for 600 pilgrims of Turkish origin who cannot otherwise visit and pray at the Hala Sultan Mosque in Larnaca during the Ramadan Bayram (Eid-al-Fitr). *“This is a result of an unprecedented agreement from 2014 between the religious leaders of Cyprus, reached within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process (RTCYPP) under the Auspices of the Embassy of Sweden”,* a statement from the RTCYPP said. The Swedish Ambassador to Cyprus Anna Olsson Vrang commenting on the visit said: *“Religious leaders advocating together the right to worship and free access to places of worship for everyone as a basic human right is a strong foundation for confidence building and reconciliation in Cyprus which my government is committed to supporting.”*

The Slovakian Embassy in Cyprus organized a series of events to mark 30 years of dialogue between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot political parties. Within the framework of events, a conference was held in the UN-controlled buffer zone. The conference was attended by the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic Miroslav Lajčák, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative Elizabeth Spehar, the European Commission’s Representative to Cyprus Ierotheos Papadopoulos, former Turkish Cypriot President Mehmet Ali Talat, former Greek Cypriot Foreign Minister Nicos Rolandis, Greek Cypriot negotiator Andreas Mavroyannis, former

Turkish Cypriot negotiator Ozdil Nami and other officials. The conference was moderated by Niyazi Kızılyurek, a Turkish Cypriot, who has recently been elected to the European Parliament in elections in the Republic of Cyprus. The impact of the dialogue of political parties on the Cyprus negotiation process and confidence-building measures were discussed at the conference.

On June 14, Turkish Cypriot Social Democratic Party (TDP)'s leader Cemal Ozyigit and the General Secretary of the Greek Cypriot Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) Andros Kyprianou held a meeting at AKEL's headquarters and discussed the latest developments.

2. Hydrocarbons

On June 5, Cyprus signed a revised production-sharing deal with U.S.-based Noble Energy and partners over commercial exploitation of Aphrodite, an offshore gas field being developed southeast of the island. According to Energy Minister Giorgos Lakkotrypis Cyprus made a good deal under the circumstances that is worth over \$9bn or around \$500m (€443m) per year over 18 years, depending on the international price of oil. The revenues are based on an average price of oil of \$70 per barrel. The talks began in the summer of 2018, when the consortium telegraphed that it was not satisfied with the revenue-sharing deal in place. The companies had struck a preliminary agreement to sell

the Aphrodite gas, some 4 trillion cubic feet, to a liquefaction facility in Egypt. However due to low oil and gas prices, the Aphrodite consortium believed the returns on their investment were unsatisfactory, and sought to renegotiate the revenue-sharing agreement with the Cypriot state. Charles Ellinas, senior fellow at the Global Energy Centre, Atlantic Council previously suggested that Cyprus' *"profit share is likely to be between \$50-100m per year"*. In an article for the Sunday Mail in May, Ellinas wrote that the key revision in the agreement would result in redistribution of profit, increasing the share of the companies when oil prices are low, but conversely would increase Cyprus' share when global oil prices rise. Ellinas stressed that the negatives of the deal far outweighed the positive of the agreement.

In a written statement, the Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hami Aksoy said that the deal made no reference to the Turkish Cypriots and they were not being offered a share of the revenues. This is a concrete example of the Greek Cypriots' continuation of the violation of the rights of the Turkish Cypriots who have equal rights on the natural resources of the island. *"This is unacceptable for both Turkey and the TRNC,"* the statement said. In a similar vein, with a written statement, the TRNC Foreign Ministry said that the Greek Cypriot administration's continued refusal to cooperate on the issue of hydrocarbons and its insistence to continue unilateral, unjust and unlawful activities once again revealed its vision regarding the

future of the island: *“The equal rights and interests of Turkish Cypriots have no room in this vision. It is the most concrete proof that the Greek Cypriots are not ready to share the island’s wealth with Turkish Cypriots,”* the statement said.

In an interview with Turkish public news agency Anadolu on June 14, Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, suggested that a natural gas agreement between the two sides and Turkey could be reached by a private company or through the EU, without signifying recognition of the TRNC by the Republic.

On June 20, Turkey launched a second drilling ship the “Yavuz” to conduct natural gas operations off the northeast coast of Cyprus near the Karpas peninsula for three months. Turkey, which does not have diplomatic relations with the Republic of Cyprus, claims that certain areas in Cyprus’ Exclusive Economic Zone, fall under the jurisdiction of Turkey or of Turkish Cypriots. The Republic of Cyprus on the other hand argues that defining its EEZ is its sovereign right. The gas dispute has escalated since May when Turkey dispatched the “Fatih” to operate in the west in an area approximately 36.6 nautical miles off the coast of Paphos and inside the Cypriot EEZ.²

² The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty which was adopted and signed in 1982. Cyprus ratified UNCLOS in 1988. According to the treaty, EEZ delimitation agreements with neighbouring countries must be

On June 18, the General Affairs Council invited the European Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to submit “options for appropriate measures” against Turkey “without delay” due to the country’s refusal to conform with international law and EU calls for restraint with regard to its drilling activities.

On June 21, the European Council stated that the EU had adopted the recommendation by President Anastasiades for concrete support in restraining illegal Turkish drilling activities. The Council’s decision involved the approval of the need to take measures against Turkey, effectively initiating the procedure of the submission of possible options. What the specific consequences or targeted measures are to be implemented by the EU, will remain to be seen.

According to government spokesman Prodromos Prodromou, in a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Anastasiades asked for the Secretary General’s support to restore the conditions that could lead to a resumption of negotiations. Anastasiades also briefed Guterres on the recent developments in the Cypriot EEZ.

formally filed with the UN. Cyprus signed EEZ delimitation agreements with Egypt (2003), Lebanon (2007) and Israel (2010). Turkey is not a signatory to UNCLOS, and does not recognise the Republic of Cyprus so no delimitation agreement exists.

3. Greek Cypriots

Economic Developments

On June 22, Fitch Ratings downgraded Bank of Cyprus' long-term senior unsecured debt rating to 'CCC' from 'B-' and Recovery Rating to 'RR6' from 'RR4'. The downgrade reflects Fitch's view that *"recovery prospects for the bank's senior unsecured creditors are now poor following the adoption of full depositor preference"*. The bank's other ratings are unaffected by this rating action.

Tourist arrivals reached 434,578 in May 2019 compared with 450,495 in May 2018, a decrease of 3.5%. Tourist arrivals from the United Kingdom decreased by 2.6% in May 2019 compared with May 2018 and a decrease of 5.4% was recorded for tourists from Russia. An increase of 7.8% in arrivals from Sweden and 9.6% from Israel were also recorded.

Domestic Developments

On June 21, former-President of the Republic of Cyprus, Dimitris Christofias passed away at the age of 72 after a month-long battle with respiratory problems. Born in Dikomo, Kyrenia, in 1946, Christofias was the Republic's sixth president, serving between 2008 and 2013. On the day of his election, he was serving his second term as House president, a position he took in 2001. He had been the leader of the Communist party AKEL between 1988 and 2009.

He did not seek re-election in 2013 after his presidency was jolted by a financial crisis for which Cyprus required an international bailout. It was also during his term when the Mari explosion took place, when ammunitions confiscated from an Iranian tanker destined for Syria exploded while being stored on Cyprus, triggering the island's worst peacetime disaster and killing 13 people. On the Cyprus Problem, Christofias and former-Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat with whom Christofias conducted negotiations, were the two leaders who saw to the opening of the Ledra Street crossing in 2008, and the setting up of the bicomunal technical committees, a handful of which have been successful in their mandates. They also opened the road for many convergences that were achieved by Anastasiades and Akinci.

On June 19, Lawyer Andreas Pasiourtides, aged 35, was declared as the new AKEL MP in the Larnaca district replacing outgoing Giorgos Georgiou who was elected as a MEP in May.

Foreign Policy

On June 27 the US Senate voted to lift the decades old arms restrictions against Cyprus. The lifting of the embargo involves only US military articles and military services requested by the Republic of Cyprus. On June 25 two amendments designed to distance Cyprus from Russian military and economic influence, were included in the bill. The amendment was inserted when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the bipartisan legislation authored by

Democratic Ranking Member Bob Menendez and Republican Senator, Marco Rubio. The amendment asks that the US president certifies to the appropriate congressional committees not less than annually that *“the government of the Republic of Cyprus has made and is continuing to take the steps necessary to deny Russian military vessels access to port for refuelling and servicing”*.

The second amendment asks that the president certifies that Cyprus *“is continuing to cooperate with the United States government in efforts to implement reforms on anti-money laundering regulations and financial regulatory oversight”*. The amendments were described as *“unfortunate”* by President Anastasiades.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

An intensive dialogue was agreed upon by the Board of Directors of the Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC) and the trade unions of employees: the Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK), the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO), the Pancyprian Public Employees Trade Union (PASYDY) and Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (DEOK). The disagreement between the trade unions of the EAC and the board of directors concerns two issues: 1) the trade unions want to put an end to cuts in staff salaries following the decision of the Administrative Court on March 29, according to which the reduction of remuneration of public servants is unconstitutional; and 2) the maintenance of the Health Care Fund in which the EAC as an employer contributes 5.9% of employees' salaries, in par-

allel with the employer's contribution to the General Healthcare System (GESY) of 1.85%. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of EAC, Emily Yioliti, stated that: *“We want to maintain a good climate, but the good climate of dialogue must be bi-directional and it is difficult maintain it in court and therefore I call on them to withdraw the lawsuits against us.”* The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nikos, Anastasiades, who had met on May 31 with the trade unions in order to initiate a dialogue on pending claims between the EAC and the trade unions, intervened after this statement. Consequently, Yoliti's requests have been put on the side. In addition, President Anastasiades suggested to the EAC's administration to follow up on the dialogue that he has started with the leadership of the major trade unions on four main pillars. The four main pillars dealt with by social dialogue on 12th of June 2019 between the administration of the electricity authority and the trade unions organized by the EAC were: 1) the strategic plan for the sustainability of the Electricity Authority; 2) the continuation of the supplementary health plan that has been active for decades and covers the entire workforce of the organization; 3) the procedures for filling up dozens of promotion posts, most of which has been pending since the 2013 economic crisis and enforcement of administrative court rulings on wage cuts and benefits in the public and wider public sector; And, 4) the resolution of other key issues that should be addressed with the aim, to find a solution over a period of about two months. The two sides said

that they would respect court rulings and agreed that the administrative Supreme Court's plenary's decision will not be a cause for further controversy. They also agreed that no public statements would be made during the negotiations. Finally, with regard to the disputed question of the procedures to be applied in the case of strikes on organizations essential to the economy, all agreed that this would be updated in the dialogue between the three social partners: (a) the state, (b) the employers, and c) the trade unions.

The divide between banks and the members of the Cyprus Union of Bank Employees (ETYK) in terms of renewing collective agreements in the financial sector is wide. The collective agreements in the banking sector expired on 31 December, except for that of the Bank of Cyprus, the renewal of which has been pending since December 2017. Six months after the end of the contracts, the two parties have not yet entered substantive negotiations. The climate of labour relations became even more strained after ETYK's threats during the organization's recent annual congress. There the honorary President of the trade union, Loizos Hadjicostis, threatened the banks "*with militant reactions*", such as strike. It described the demands of the employers, for the abolition of the yearly increases of salaries and the appraisal system for officers as unacceptable. ETYK demands a modernization/update of both the appraisal system as well as of promotion criteria and salary raises. The Minister of Labour, Zeta Emilianidou, led the negotiations on the renewal of contracts in

banks and since the beginning of the year there has been a series of consultations with the leadership of ETYK and with several top executives of banks. The indications thus far do not indicate a positive conclusion to the negotiations. ETYK is claiming a reinstatement of the cut that had been imposed on workers' salaries in the banking sector since 2012. At the two systemic banks, namely Bank of Cyprus and in Hellenic bank, the salary reduction is calculated, according to the trade union, at 15% while the cuts in the remaining banks vary between 10% and 12%. The trade union also claims increases for low-wage earners, participation in Boards of Bank, payment of the price index annual raise (which compensates for inflation) and surcharges. The banks' reaction to ETYK's claims was given by their large shareholders who declared themselves ready to fight for the containment of labour costs. The employer's side claims that 75% of every euro earned by banks is spent on labour costs. The banks also consider that, with any satisfaction of the claims of the trade union, they will be required to bear an additional cost of more than 5% to the total of their existing payroll.

On June 11 the signing ceremony of the Pancyprian collective agreements took place. These agreements govern the terms of service of the staff and the employees of the municipalities for the period 1 January 2017-31 December 2018. In a written announcement of the Association of Municipalities it is stated that "*the Pancyprian Collective Agreements (P.C.A) are the second that are signed and follow the*

conventions 2015-16 (signed retrospectively on 5 December 2017)". It is added that with the latest Pancyprian Collective Agreements "an important common goal of municipalities and trade unions was promoted, that of limiting the differences that exist from municipality to municipality, regarding the benefits of staff of municipalities".

The negotiations for the renewal of the collective agreement in hotels ended in a deadlock. The Ministry of Labour has taken over the mediator's role to solve this labour dispute. The Minister of Labour mentioned in an informal meeting with the leadership of the SEK, PEO and the Cyprus Hotels Association (PASYXE) and Cyprus Tourist Association (ACTE), that by the end of June the conditions for a peaceful renewal of the contract should be fulfilled. She warned of the negative impact for the hotel industry in case of a confrontation between the two parties in particular at the peak of the tourist season. Trade unions demand, among others, wage increases of 4% over the two-year period of the contract. They expect wages and similar benefits to be restored to collective agreement levels on 31 December 2012, before the March 2013 crisis. The hoteliers were confined to accepting part of the wage increases demanded by the trade unions, without the satisfaction of the additional demands that entail an increase in labour costs. In addition to wage increases, hotel workers demanded an improvement in the conditions related to holiday leaves. That is to say, holiday days are to be

granted until 31 March of each year or to be reimbursed in cash until 31 of May each year, unless special arrangements are made after consultation with the trade unions. As far as the provident fund is concerned, the trade unions are demanding that for each employee who has completed six months of service, contributions from both employers and employees, which are calculated on the basic salary and the price index, are paid to the hotel welfare fund. During the Easter period, a bonus equal to 30% of the monthly salary is provided. However, in a joint session, the trade unions of SEK and PEO employees decided to launch a campaign to inform employees in the hotel industry and prepare them for a dynamic response in case of failure to reach an agreement on the Collective Agreement during the stage of mediation of the Ministry of Labour.

Salary increases and other benefits totalling 7% are provided for in the new collective agreement for Limassol port workers. It took 18 months of negotiations between the two foreign private investors (DP World Limassol and Eurogate Container Terminal Limassol) managing the port, the shipping agents' association and the SEK and PEO trade unions to reach an agreement. The two sides have accepted a mediation proposal by Minister of Labour Zeta Emilianidou. The new contract, which ended on 31 December 2017, was concluded for three years and will expire on 31 December 2020.

A 4-hour strike took place on June 27, in which taxi drivers protested about numerous unresolved problems they face. According to an announcement by the Pancyprian Taxi Co-ordination Committee, the most recent major issue is *"the statement and attitude of the new President of the Licensing Authority for Road Traffic Licenses (Taxi Licenses) requesting that these licenses should not be sold or that they should be taxed by the state on the amount of the sale"*. It is a fact that they find inconceivable as it would equal taxing the capital invested in their profession. Other problems, noted, are *"piracy and social insurance costs"*.

4. Turkish Cypriots

Economic Developments

According to the data announced by the TRNC Central Bank, in the first quarter of 2019, the total actives of banks have increased by 7,5% to reach 35,5 bn. Turkish Lira (€ 5,5 bn). The share of non-performing loans increased by 17,2% to reach 1.06 bn. Turkish Lira compared to the first quarter of 2018. Meanwhile, the government ran a budget deficit of 20 million Turkish Lira in the first quarter.

The inflation went up by 1.27% in March and 12-month inflation reached to 24.69% according to the State Planning Organization.

Relations with Turkey

Prime Minister, Ersin Tatar and Deputy Prime Minister, Kudret Ozersay visited Istanbul to meet with the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Vice-President Fuat Oktay and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlut Cavusoglu. The visit came just a day after the new government received a vote of confidence in parliament. Before the meeting, Ozersay said that the conversation would focus on economic and financial issues as well as the latest developments regarding the Cyprus problem and the Eastern Mediterranean. After the meeting, Ozersay said that they focused on re-establishing the money flow from Ankara, which had stopped after the expiration of the previous economic protocol and failure to sign a new one leaving no legal framework for funds to be sent.

The annual Search and Rescue Exercise was held with the participation of search and rescue teams from Turkey and the TRNC.

The Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dursun Oguz, met with Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Bekir Pakdemirli, as part of his contacts in Ankara where he also attended the World Day to Combat Desertification Conference.

Domestic Developments

On June 1, the new coalition government has received the vote of confidence. 41 MP's (out of 50) took part in the voting, 28 of whom voted in favour of the new government, while 13 voted

against. The National Unity Party (UBP) – People’s Party (HP) became the 41st Turkish Cypriot government since 1983.

Prime Minister Tatar said that the Economic and Financial Cooperation Protocol with Turkey covering 2019 would be signed in July and the 2020-2022 protocol would be signed in October the latest - before the start of budget discussions on the 31st of October. Touching upon the harmony of the UBP-HP government, Tatar said *“this government is in harmony in terms of ideology and stance”* adding that they were in harmony on the Cyprus issue, economic issues and the relations with Turkey.

Members of parliament voted in favour of forming an ad hoc parliamentary committee. This was for the purpose of lifting former Prime Minister Huseyin Ozgurgun’s immunity from prosecution. The Attorney-General’s office has so far produced three files against Ozgurgun based on property ownership allegations, in addition to two about asset declaration. The committee will examine the evidence and seek a response from Ozgurgun and will complete its work and submit its evidence to Parliament within 45 days. The committee – composed of ruling UBP MPs Yasemin Ozturk, Oguzhan Hasipoglu and Hamza Ersan Saner, Mesut Genc and Gulsah Sanver Manavioglu of the junior coalition partner People’s Party (HP) and Salahi Sahinler and Fazilet Ozdenefe of the opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) – is to start its work during Parliament’s summer recess. Meanwhile, supporters of the former prime minister claimed there was

“war” now against HP leader Ozersay, whom they hold responsible for lifting the immunity of Ozgurgun. Moreover, they claim that the “gloves were off” within UBP after Tatar, who last year defeated Ozgurgun to become the party leader, agreed to set up the ad hoc committee.

The party assembly of the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) decided to hold the ordinary party congress which was initially planned to be held in November 2019 on the 6th of October 2019. The leader and members of the party assembly will be elected during the ordinary party congress.

The UBP Party Assembly elected its new secretary general following the resignation of Hasan Tacoy who became the Minister of Economy. Two candidates, Hamza Ersan Saner (Famagusta MP) and Kutlu Evren (Kyrenia MP) contested for the post. Saner who received 76 votes was elected as the new secretary general of the party. Evren received 35 votes.

According to Trafficking in Persons Report prepared by the US State Department, *“The area administered by Turkish Cypriots continues to be a zone of impunity for human trafficking. Turkish Cypriot authorities do not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and are not making significant efforts to do so. Turkish Cypriots did not keep statistics on law enforcement efforts against trafficking offenders.”*

Foreign Policy

The government has decided to include Syria in the list of countries which require a visa for entering the TRNC. The move followed the recent rise in the number of Syrian citizens arriving in the northern part of Cyprus with the intention of crossing over to the south. According to the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the temporary shelter area at Ercan (Tymbou) Airport is no longer able to cope with the influx of Syrian refugees and migrants, leading to unsanitary conditions. The statement said that the TRNC was among the countries which felt the impact of Syrian refugees trying to escape their war-torn country. It added that the United Nations High Commission for Refugees was working in close consultation and collaboration with the TRNC Foreign Ministry.

5. FES Cyprus Events**July**

--- no events ---

August

--- no events ---

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