



Contents

1.	FES Cyprus Events	2
2.	Cyprus Problem.....	3
3.	Hydrocarbons	6
4.	Greek Cypriots	7
	Economic Developments	7
	Domestic Developments	8
5.	Turkish Cypriots	11
	Economic Developments.....	11
	Relations with Turkey.....	12
	Domestic Developments	12
	Labour Relations and Trade Unions	13

FES NEWS

- - please follow and visit us on -

[Twitter.com/FESCyprus](https://twitter.com/FESCyprus) - www.FEScyprus.org - www.facebook.com/FEScyprus

For subscription to this free newsletter please find the form
here www.fescyprus.org/newsletter/

1. FES Cyprus Events

January

Friday, 10th January 2020, 6.30 – 9.30 pm

CAD / Australian High Commission / FES

Workshop

**Famagusta Dialogues
Proposal & Work Plan
Turkish Cypriot Famagusta Community
Consultation**

Ezic Restaurant Meeting Room, Famagusta

Not open to the public



**Saturday, 11th January 2020,
10.00 am – 1.00 pm**

CAD / Australian High Commission / FES

Workshop

**Famagusta Dialogues
Proposal & Work Plan
Greek Cypriot Famagusta Community
Consultation**

Famagusta Municipality Cultural Centre,
Deryneia

Not open to the public



**Saturday, 18th January 2020,
3.30 pm – 7.30 pm**

CAD / Australian High Commission / FES

Workshop

**Famagusta Dialogues
Proposal & Work Plan
Joint Famagusta Dialogue #1
(Turkish Cypriot hosted)**

Buğday Cami (St. Peter and Paul Church)

28 Mehmet Çelebi St., Famagusta Walled City

Not open to the public



**Saturday, 25th January 2020,
3.00 pm – 7.00 pm**

CAD / Australian High Commission / FES

Workshop

**Famagusta Dialogues
Proposal & Work Plan
Joint Famagusta Dialogue #2
(Greek Cypriot hosted)**

THALASSA Municipal Museum of the Sea

Kriou Nerou 14, Agia Napa

Not open to the public



2. Cyprus Problem

Following his invitation in October for an informal trilateral meeting in Berlin for the month of November, UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, met with the respective Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders, Mustafa Akinci and Nicos Anastasiades.

The aim of the meeting, which took place on November 25, was to make progress on the terms of reference, paving the way for the possible resumption of the negotiations process. However, both Turkish and Greek Cypriot sides had expressed reservations with regards to restarting the peace talks. The Greek Cypriot leader had not expected much progress at the Trilateral due to Turkey's reluctance to see developments on the Cyprus problem until after the elections in the north, expected to take place in April 2020.

"A positive step was taken today. We put the derailed process back on track but this alone is not enough. We need to work together for this train to reach its final destination," Akinci said at a press conference in Berlin shortly after the trilateral meeting. Akinci also said that the grounds for a five-party meeting had been prepared in Berlin and that such a meeting would not be rushed. The leader of the main opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) Tufan Erhurman welcomed the outcome of the trilateral meeting too: *"Most of these were agreed upon in Crans Montana but the fact that they were confirmed after two years of debate is*

important. The most important outcome to emerge from this meeting is the end put to the meaningless debate created on the subject of political equality by the initiative undertaken by the UN Secretary-General. We should continue to work for a comprehensive solution with all our strength," he said. Evaluating the trilateral meeting held in Berlin on social media, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kudret Ozersay said, *"There is something which is dead but no one dares to hold a funeral. This is what the situation is."*

Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu speaking before the Turkish national assembly's budget committee stated that Turkey was not prepared to negotiate under the current conditions and stressed that vagueness regarding political equality between the two sides must first be clarified.

Following the meeting, Guterres committed to continue efforts towards an agreement on the terms of reference so that proper negotiations can resume. He stressed however that this time attitudes must be different. Guterres also committed to explore with the two leaders and the guarantor powers (UK, Turkey and Greece) the possibility of convening an informal five party meeting at an appropriate stage. According to Guterres both leaders welcomed his engagement and reaffirmed their commitment and determination to achieve a settlement based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation, with political equality as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions. He added that the

two leaders affirmed their commitment to the Joint Declaration of February 11, 2014, the prior convergences and the six-point framework he presented on June 30, 2017 in Crans-Montana. Lastly, he described his talks with the two leaders as “focused and frank”.

Ahead of the meeting, pro reunification group Unite Cyprus Now (UCN) sent a letter to Guterres and the UN Security Council asking them to work with the leaders to bring an end to the division of Cyprus and to keep the sides within UN parameters, the June 30 framework and past agreements. A rally attended by approximately 500 demonstrators was held from Kyrenia gate in the north to the Presidential palace in the south calling on both leaders to seize the opportunity.

In his latest report regarding the Good Offices Mission in Cyprus circulated to the UN Security Council on November 15, Guterres stated that prospects for the resumption of negotiations are uncertain and expressed growing concern over developments around the issue of hydrocarbons. He urged all parties to take advantage of the consultations currently under way to lay the foundations for new and clear commitments. He also reiterated his call on the parties to consider constructively the six-point framework he proposed on June 30, 2017.

On November 22, the UN Security Council urged the two leaders to use their meeting in Berlin with the UN Secretary General to renew their

political will and commitment to a comprehensive settlement.

The annual Toros military exercise carried out jointly by the Turkish forces in north Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot security forces has been cancelled. The Presidential spokesperson Baris Burcu said that the exercise, as in previous years, had been cancelled following the decision by the Greek Cypriot authorities not to hold its own annual Nikiforos exercise.

Akinci slammed members of the far-right Elam for burning a TRNC flag during demonstrations held in south Nicosia to protest the 36th anniversary of the establishment of the TRNC. *“ELAM is not limited to hate speech but carries out acts of hate, which serves politically-fueled hostility,”* Akinci said. He also stated that the Turkish Cypriotsexpected *“the right voices will speak out against the wrong behaviour of ELAM fascists in Greek Cypriot society”*. Few days later, Deputy Prime Minister-Foreign Minister Kudret Ozersay announced that they have identified the people who burned the TRNC flag: *“Instructions have been given to the police for the necessary measures to be put in place at the crossing points,”* Ozersay said.

On November 12, Turkish Cypriot media referencing TRNC¹ foreign minister Kudret Ozersay, reported that the Turkish Cypriots have completed its inventory of buildings and other infrastructure in the fenced-off town of Varosha in Famagusta and plans to take it to the TRNC cabinet. After an intervention by the Cyprus Republic in October 2019, the UN Security Council reaffirmed resolutions 550 and 789, adopted in 1984 and 1992 respectively, which refer to the fenced off area of Famagusta. UNSC resolution 550 considers any attempts to settle any part of Varosha by people other than its inhabitants as inadmissible and calls for the transfer of this area to the administration of the UN, while resolution 789 also urges that Varosha come under the control of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

According to figures released by the justice ministry, the number of Greek-Cypriots crossing to the north almost tripled in 2019 in relation to

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).

2018. According to data revealed in parliament, 1,776,343 Greek Cypriots crossed to the north between January 1 and September 30, a 63% increase over the corresponding period of 2018 when only 658,741 Cypriots living in the south crossed. At the same time, Turkish Cypriots visiting the south also showed an increase in the first nine months of 2019 with 970,510 visits this year compared to 791,103 2018, an 18,5% increase. The number of Turkish Cypriot vehicles crossing during the same period also rose by 18,5%, with 375,835 crossings compared to 308,420 in 2018.

Various business organizations in the northern part of Cyprus demanded more border crossings and measures to speed up procedures at existing ones to handle the rising number of visitors to the north from the south. Motor insurance paperwork should be completed away from the checkpoints and “UN-issued fast track cards” introduced to be used instead of passports and ID cards to prevent queues, business representatives requested during a demonstration at the Ayios Dometios/Metehan checkpoint in Nicosia. They also called for extra staff at the checkpoints, particularly at Metehan; an increase in the number of lanes at the crossings; improvements to the “physical infrastructure” of the sites; and new crossing points at the Caglayan and Kucuk Kaymakli quarters of Nicosia and in Pergama and Famagusta.

According to a survey released on November 11 by the European Social Survey Greek Cypriots prefer a unified state than a bizonal bicommun-

nal federation (BBF), as the accepted basis for negotiating the Cyprus problem. In particular, 57,2% preferred a unified state while 27% a BBF. Another 38,1% said they were neither for nor against a BBF while 35% opposed this type of solution. Asked about a two-state solution, the vast majority, 72.4% were against this idea while 50,8% were not in favour of the status quo. The sample size used was around 800 people and covered all urban and rural areas of Cyprus between October 2018 and April 2019, seeking attitudes towards politics and government.

A delegation from the Republican Turkish Party (CTP) headed by its leader Tufan Erhurman paid a visit to the DISY headquarters.

3. Hydrocarbons

On November 11, the Turkish drillship Fatih returned to Cypriot waters where it started operations off the coast of Karpasia, in north-eastern Cyprus. The vessel had left earlier in the month its initial location west of Cyprus where it had been anchored since May. The arrival of the Fatih was announced after the adoption by the EU Foreign Affairs Council of a framework for restrictive measures against persons and companies involved in Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the eastern Mediterranean.

On November 19, Greek oil company ENERGEAN announced via a press release that it

has formally applied to Cypriot authorities to pipe natural gas to the island, adding that the gas could flow as early as 2021. The company proposes to pipe gas from the North Karish field, in Israeli waters, to Vasilikos in Cyprus. According to the press release the total investment will be approximately \$350m and will be funded by the company. The Republic of Cyprus will bear no upfront cost. Provided that there will be no delays in permitting procedures, the project will allow the Republic of Cyprus to receive competitively priced natural gas from 2021.

Turkish Daily Milliyet reported on November 22, that Turkey and the north are discussing the creation of a pipeline to connect the two countries and transport natural gas, which could be up and running by 2025. According to the paper the project concerns a bidirectional natural gas pipeline with the Greek Cypriot side reportedly trying to block the project. Speaking to reporters at the budget planning meeting at the Turkish Parliament, the Turkish Minister for Energy and Natural Resources, Fatih Donmez, confirmed the reports about bringing electricity via undersea cable and natural gas via a pipeline to the TRNC from Turkey but said that a timetable had not been set yet. Regarding hydrocarbons in the Eastern Mediterranean, Donmez said that reports prepared by leading international energy firms said that important natural gas reserves existed in the region. *"We have achieved independence in offshore research and drilling capabilities through domestic means,"* Donmez added.

On November 29, Energy Minister Giorgos Lakkotrypis stated the Natural Gas Infrastructure Company (ETYFA) is in consultations to sign the first bidder, in attempts to finalise a contract by the end of the year, supplying natural gas to the Cypriot domestic market.

As part of an agreement on expanded security and military cooperation on November 28, Turkey and the internationally recognised government of Libya also announced a deal on maritime boundaries, the details of which were not disclosed. The deal was condemned by the Cypriot foreign ministry as well as Greece and Egypt.

4. Greek Cypriots

Economic Developments

According to the findings of a report from European Commission staff and the European Central Bank, economic growth is gradually slowing down, despite Cyprus' economy remaining strong. The report found that after real GDP growth of 4,1% in 2018, the pace of economic expansion moderated in the first half of 2019 (without disclosing how much), largely reflecting external headwinds. As regards tourism, the report said that following record-high growth rates in 2016-2018, tourism revenues showed some weakness in the first half of 2019. The report noted that the Cypriot banking sector still has the second highest non-performing loan (NPL) ratio in the euro area.

On November 25, the Finance Minister Harris Georgiades presented a bill to establish a Deputy Ministry of Innovation and Digital Policy. The new deputy ministry will bring together the Department of Information Technology Services which is now under the Ministry of Finance and the Electronic Communications Department which is now under the Ministry of Transport.

Cyprus' budget, along with those of Germany, Ireland, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and Austria were found to be compliant with the Stability and Growth Pact in 2020, according to the European Commission assessment, published on November 20 in Brussels. On Cyprus, the European Commission stated there is limited progress with implementing the fiscal-structural part of the 2019 country-specific recommendations, but the medium-term budgetary objective and compliance with the debt reduction benchmark are met both in 2019 and 2020. Cyprus, however, remains on the list of countries with excessive macroeconomic imbalances.

On November 29, Fitch Ratings affirmed Bank of Cyprus' (BoC) Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (LTIDR) at B- with a positive outlook and viability rating at B-, and the LTIDR of Hellenic Bank's at B+ with a stable outlook and viability rating at B+. BoC's ratings reflect its weak asset quality, which results in very high encumbrance of capital by unreserved problem assets, and profitability, which is still constrained by loans impairment charges. Hellenic Bank's rating reflects its strong franchise and market position as the

second-largest bank in Cyprus and improved overall financial profile, mainly following the acquisition of Cyprus Cooperative Bank LTD (CCB) in September 2018, which came with a capital increase (€150m).

Domestic Developments

On November 29, DISY MP Solon Kasinis resigned, reportedly over serious health reasons, along with Stella Kyriakidou who gave up her seat in parliament following her appointment as EU Commissioner for Health. The resignations paved the way for new faces in DISY's parliamentary group.

The government announced on November 6 that it will start procedures for the revocation of the passports granted to 26 people after the uproar caused by recent revelations that among the successful applicants was a Malaysian wanted by his country in connection with alleged financial crimes as well as relatives and allies of the Cambodian authoritarian leader. The other revocations reportedly concern nine Russians, five Chinese, one Iranian and two Kenyans. The Republic of Cyprus has come under severe criticism from the EU over its passport scheme, which grants full citizenship to successful applicants. From the EU member states only Malta and until recently Bulgaria offer full citizenship within a quick track passport scheme.

On November 27, the government announced changes to the Green Line Regulation implementation code, mainly affecting third-country

nationals. Among others, third-country nationals who have not arrived on the island through authorised ports of entry were banned from crossing into the Republic. Third-country nationals on temporary resident visas, like domestic workers, have also been banned from going north. The ban will not affect asylum seekers. Tourists will also be allowed through, as long as they will not be staying on land or in hotels with Greek Cypriot ownership. Stricter enforcement of checks at the crossing points and monitoring of the buffer zone was also decided.

According to a report issued by the Statistical Service the population grew 1,4% in Cyprus with an estimated 875,900 inhabitants compared to 864,200 inhabitants in 2017. The report also showed a general ageing of the population. Reportedly, 16,1% of the population were below 15 years old as was the case with the people over 65. In 2000 the respective figures were 22,3 % and 11,3% marking an increase in the proportion of old people and a decrease in the proportion of children.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

On November 6, the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) signed a collective agreement with the company THERMOSOLAR IFM J.V. which regulates the working and payment conditions of staff. It was signed as part of the objective set by the Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK) and the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) trade unions, requiring the companies undertaking projects in the public and

semi-public sector, to implement a collective agreement. PEO states that *"this objective has been achieved and we believe that this should be done with all companies undertaking public works, as provided in the relevant standard rules. The obligation of employers to enforce collective agreements is necessary to protect employees from unfair recruitment practices, to safeguard their rights and to avoid exploitation."* The collective agreement signed sets out the working hours of the staff, the overtime pay work, holidays, annual leave, welfare fund, various benefits and recruitment salaries.

The sea port workers have been warning that they will conduct a long duration strike in ports since December 1st, demanding that the Ministry of Transport must take over its responsibilities and put an end to employers' anti-labour policies in ports. The main reason for the strike, according to the workers, is the decision of DP WORLD Limassol to carry out the work of the port workers on its own, i.e. with its own staff from 12 December 2019. The company had labour disputes with the port workers and ignored the call by the Ministry of Transport for consultations to resolve the dispute. It is noted that the port workers are paid on a daily basis, i.e. they get paid for the days they have worked only.

On November 7, the staff of the Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC) conducted an eight-hour strike, protesting the breach of collective agreements by the Board of Directors. One of

the issues that staff complained about is the Ministerial Council decision of February 2019 to shut down their health funds in June 2020 with the full implementation of the General Healthcare System (GESY). In a letter to the Board of Directors of the Electricity Authority, the trade unions underline *"the bitterness and indignation of the staff"* because the Board of Directors did not understand the reasons that had driven the workers into mobilizations. However, employers' organizations consider it unacceptable that, once GESY has been implemented, semi-governmental organizations will continue to pay and cover all their staff contributions to health funds, ignoring the fact that taxpayers will cover these contributions.

The Board of Directors of the Cyprus Union of Bank Employees (ETYK) ordered its lawyers to institute criminal proceedings against the management of the Hellenic Bank (Board of Directors and Executive Directors), in breach of Article 23 of the Constitution, which stipulates that employees' salaries constitute an asset and considers their non-concession a criminal offense. According to the ETYK, while the bank's management claims to have given the 'annual' surcharge in its own way (even though illegal) it does not answer to the non-concession of Automatic Indexing (ATA) currently amounting to 1.5% of salary. This should have been given to all staff since 1 January 2019. At the same time, they note that some employees are officially considered by the bank as employees of a lower category. *"Seasonal exploitation must be stopped immediately and the Bank must ap-*

point all those who have already completed 12 months of service" they state. At Hellenic Bank, both management and management characterize ETYK's behavior as inappropriate. They emphasized that this behavior tends to maintain tension in their relationships, rather than being helpful for engaging in good-faith dialogue with the goal of finding a mutually accepted solution to the payment and evaluation system. The Bank believes that its decision to grant unilateral salary increases based on a fair and merit-based system was made. As they note, this has been done in light of the performance and productivity of each employee separately. The bank, however, maintains that the amount of wage increases it recently granted to staff is greater than what the collective agreement stipulates, and that ETYK's attitude is to refuse dialogue and to create conditions that exacerbate the climate by threats and blackmail. Hellenic Bank employees ended a 24-hour strike on October 11th with the union pointing out in a circular that it intends to step up the measures. It is worth noting that the renewal of collective agreements in banks, which expired on 31st December 2018, is still pending while only three financial institutions have so far granted the annual surcharge and ATA based on the provisions of the contracts. These are Alpha Bank, AstroBank and JCC Company Organization (Payment Systems). The debate on horizontal pay rises and the change in the promotion system, which is a demand of banks, remains on the sidelines, despite being perhaps the biggest thorn in ETYK and bank relations.

The Department of Forestry Officers held a two-hour protest demanding the opening of vacancies for newly-hired employees in the Department of Forestry and the expedition of their filling procedures. Forestry Department officers are urgently demanding the filling of all 27 vacancies, which were put on hold in 2012-2015. At least half of these vacancies are under consideration in the current 2020 state budget bill, as the first phase of the organizational structure rehabilitation of the Department. In a memorandum delivered to the Parliament, the Forestry Department officers are demonstrating their readiness and determination to fight in any lawful manner in order to restore the staffing of the Department to a satisfactory level, for the benefit of the conservation and protection of forests. According to Forest Department officers, the existing staffing of the Department in absolute terms is 100 employees less than projected in 2011, with 60 vacancies on the entry level and 30 other vacancies. As they note in relation to these vacancies, there are 43 full-time employees under limited time contracts awaiting appointment. It is noted that the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment announced yesterday the Ministry's intention to announce ten posts for Forest Officers and three for Forest Conservators, a move that the Department is looking at with a positive outlook. However, it highlights that this development is not at all sufficient and that there needs to be additional staff hires for the Department to function effectively.

A recurrence was triggered at the last minute before the signing of the collective agreement at the hotels, due to objections raised by hoteliers' associations over the final memorandum sent to them by the Labour Minister Zeta Emilianidou. On November 22, at the office of the Labour Minister a "ritual" meeting of the Cyprus Hotels Association (PASYXE) and the Cyprus Tourist Association (ACTE) with the leaders of the SEK and PEO trade unions was scheduled, aiming at the renewal of the collective agreement for hotel employees. The meeting was postponed, allowing the hoteliers associations to submit in writing to the Minister of Labour the provisions of the final text of the collective agreement. The hoteliers argue that the interpretation of the provisions does not reflect exactly what was originally agreed upon during the marathon and overnight negotiations between the three parties. The points which have led to the recurrence of the collective agreement relate mainly to the distribution of contributions to the welfare fund and the incorporation of wage increases into the regulations. Both points have previously been brought before the Labour Minister by hoteliers at their provincial assemblies when they agreed upon Minister Emilianidou's mediation proposal. She had then given clear explanations on these issues which the hoteliers had repeatedly asked for. The collective agreement in the hotel sector provides, among other things, for salary increases of 5.5%, which will be gradually granted on an annual basis over a four-year period. It is also envisaged that employers will pay 1% to

the Personnel Welfare Fund, improve benefits and allowances for work on Sundays or public holidays.

5. Turkish Cypriots

Economic Developments

The Council of Ministers have approved the draft 2020 budget at 8,814 million TL (€1,232 million) and sent it to parliament. The government spokesperson Kudret Ozersay said that the budget has increased by 11.78 percent compared to the previous year's budget. Ozersay also added that the budget deficit of 2019, which had been projected to be 851 million TL, fell down to 197.7 million TL. According to the draft which was negotiated at the Parliament's Committee on Economy, Finance and Planning, the budget deficit was calculated to reach up to 578 million TL (€ 86 million) in 2020. Later in the month, the budget was accepted with a majority decision, with an additional 10-million TL, which slightly increased the budget to 8,824 million TL. The additional 10-million TL was added to the annual budget of the Ministry of Agriculture.

According to the Tourism Planning Department, 63.23 percent (818,880 people) of the 1.3 million Turkish and Third country nationals who visited the TRNC between January and September 2019 have stayed at the touristic facilities. The remaining 36.77 percent of the visitors (476,145) did not enter the country for touristic

purposes, and are thought to be students, officials or domestic / migrant workers (both registered and unregistered).

Relations with Turkey

Prime Minister Ersin Tatar visited Turkey several times in November. He received the Statesman of the Year Award bestowed on him by the Turkic Asian Center for Strategic Studies (TASAM), met with Turkish Cypriots living in Istanbul, gave interviews to Fox TV and CNN Turk, and attended the 10th Bosphorus Summit in Istanbul as the guest of the International Cooperation Platform.

The Economy and Energy Minister Hasan Tacoy gave a speech at the 35th Ministerial Meeting of the Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), which was held in Istanbul. The Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources Dursun Oguz attended the “the promotion of sustainable food systems in Islamic countries and agricultural development” panel held in Istanbul as part of the COMCEC. As part of his contacts in Istanbul, Oguz was also received by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He also exchanged views with the Turkish Vice-President Fuat Oktay.

Domestic Developments

According to Cyprus Today, Prime Minister, Ersin Tatar, looks set to be a candidate in next April’s presidential elections after he received the backing of his National Unity Party (UBP).

Tatar was unanimously declared as the UBP’s most favoured candidate after a two-and-a-half-hour meeting of its Nicosia district branch, despite previously saying that he did not want to run in the election race. A UBP spokesperson stressed, however, that the vote was of an “advisory nature” and that the result would be submitted to the UBP assembly for final approval. Thanking all those who voted for him, Tatar said: *“It’s as if they spoke in a single voice, all the party members supported my candidacy and trust me. There is no reversing from this point.”*

The leader of the junior coalition partner HP (People’s Party) Kudret Ozersay said that the coalition government was working in harmony. Ozersay also said that thanks to the governments’ consensus on the Cyprus problem, as the Foreign Ministry, they could now strongly defend the need for a change in paradigm on the Cyprus issue which they believed was inevitable.

A review of the driving license system has been demanded by Prime Minister, Ersin Tatar, after fatalities on the roads in 2019 reached 29 by early November. Tatar highlighted that *“99 percent of those taking the driving test pass it”* and called for an investigation into the high success rate. The opposition blamed the government for the increasing death toll. *“Roads are in darkness and full of potholes and this issue is a crucial problem that the government needs to take seriously,”* Huseyin Angolemli

(Social Democratic Party, TDP, Famagusta MP) said.

Legal proceedings against two National Unity Party (UBP) MPs suspected of corruption can now commence, Attorney General, Behic Ozturk, said in response to questions from members of parliament during the discussion over the budget of his department at the parliament. Ozturk made the comment following the removal of both MPs' immunity against prosecution. While Lefka MP Aytac Caluda's immunity was lifted "in a short time", the process to end former Prime Minister Huseyin Ozgurgun's immunity, which was completed in October, took about "one and a half years" Ozturk said.

Labour Relations and Trade Unions

The leader of the electricity workers' union El-Sen has threatened to plunge the country into darkness if the government does not purchase four new power generators as agreed upon. The warning was made as the government used its legal power to suspend an indefinite strike called by El-Sen on November 26 that left some parts of the TRNC without power for up to 12 hours. In Famagusta reportedly angry members of the public tried to storm the local offices of the electricity authority Kib-Tek in protest at the power cuts. Kib-Tek maintenance workers refused to repair faults, except for those affecting schools and hospitals, leaving parts of the country without power for hours.

An amnesty for illegal foreign workers came into force this month. Those working without a permit now can apply for a 40-day tourist visa on payment of a fine equal to the monthly minimum wage of 3,150TL, under a previously reported amendment to the Aliens and Immigration Act. Applications must be submitted within 90 days of the law coming into effect and the process completed within 40 days. 8,000 to 10,000 foreign nationals are thought to work illegally in the TRNC.

According to Labour and Social Security Minister, Faiz Sucuoglu, *"Many of these people have to stay in different places every day and live in inhumane conditions ... Their daily wages are very low and they are deprived of health and other services. They are presently living here but at the same time they are not here because they are not recorded."* Sucuoglu added that *"In the last eight years, there has been an increase in the number of those arriving here from countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and India, with only a slight increase in those coming from Turkey."*

Meanwhile, according to the workplace inspections carried out by the Labour Department in the first 8 months of 2019, one in five employees work without a work permit. Inspectors have checked 1,024 workplaces where 2,163 workers worked and detected 440 unregistered workers. Two thirds of unregistered workers were Turkish nationals.

A strike which threatened to lead to fuel shortages at K-Pet petrol stations (one of the two suppliers) across the country was called off after fuel distribution workers and K-Pet administration reached a deal. Revolutionary Workers' Trade Unions Federation (Dev-Is) general secretary, Koral Asam, told Cyprus Today that the indefinite strike had come to an end after the signing of a new collective agreement. He said: *"Agreement has been reached to employ more staff, as asked for by the union."*

The FES-Newsletter team and the FES office in Cyprus wish you all the best for 2020.

Imprint:**Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)**

Office Cyprus
20, Stasandrou, Apt. 401
CY 1060 Nicosia

Tel. +357 22 377 336
Email: office@fescyprus.org
Web-Seite: www.fescyprus.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/FESCyprus
Twitter: @FESCyprus

Text:

Hubert Faustmann, Yiannis Charalambous,
Sertac Sonan, Enis Porat, Gianna Chatzigeorgiou
and Sophia Papastavrou

Layout:

Gaby Hamann

If you want to subscribe to this (free) monthly newsletter, please fill in the form on our website:
www.fescyprus.org/newsletter/

If you want to unsubscribe please click the link in your FES Newsletter mail.