



**Contents**

1.	Cyprus Problem.....	2
2.	Hydrocarbons.....	4
3.	Greek Cypriots .....	5
	Economic Developments .....	5
	Domestic Developments.....	7
	Labour Relations and Trade Unions.....	8
4.	Turkish Cypriots .....	9
	Economic Developments .....	9
	Relations with Turkey .....	10
	Domestic Developments.....	10
	Labour Relations and Trade Unions.....	12
5.	FES Cyprus Events .....	12

**FES NEWS**

We are happy to announce that several of our events are now available on the FES YouTube-Channel. Please find the links on our website.

<http://www.fescyprus.org/pages/english/home.php>

## 1. Cyprus Problem

On December 7, Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan was in Athens as part of a two-day official visit, where he was received by Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. The visit was the first held by a Turkish head of state since 1952, and was expected to push forward the stagnated reunification process following the collapse of the Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana last July. In a joint news conference following their meeting, Erdogan and Tsipras engaged in a dialogue on the Cyprus problem. Tsipras noted that, the Cyprus problem is an issue of an illegal invasion and occupation. He added that it is an “open issue” going on for 43 years because both sides kept blaming each other for the failure of negotiations and expressed the hope that negotiations would resume as soon as possible. Responding, Erdogan remarked that, no foreign troops would be stationed in Cyprus today, had the Greek Cypriots voted for the Annan Plan in 2004. He called the Greek Cypriots rejection of the Annan Plan a “the mistake” and blamed the Greek Cypriot negotiating team and its leadership for walking out the reunification talks in Switzerland. The Turkish President also met with Greek President, Prokopis Pavlopoulos, with both men reiterating their respective outlooks on how a Cyprus solution might be achieved. Pavlopoulos stressed that any settlement should be consistent with international law and the EU acquis. Erdogan accused the European Union of failing to deliver on its promises to the Turkish Cypriots.

Commenting on Erdogan’s visit, government spokesman Nicos Christodoulides referred to the talks in Crans-Montana having collapsed due to the intransigence of the Turkish positions. He also reiterated the Greek Cypriot position: preparations need to be undertaken between Greece and Turkey on the chapter of security and guarantees before reconvening a new conference on Cyprus in order to assess whether a real chance exists for a successful outcome. In particular, Christodoulides noted that “should Turkey persist with the same positions, then a new conference would fail”.

In an interview published by Greek newspaper “To Vima” following his official visit in Athens, Erdogan stated that as long as Greek Cypriots do not consider Turkish Cypriots as politically equals and not a minority, settlement negotiations will remain inconclusive.

Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci said that, the visit by a Turkish head of state to Athens after 65 years was an important development and that good relations between Turkey and Greece would not only be beneficial for the Turkish and Greek nations but for the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities as well. Akinci, however pointed out that the Cyprus problem had not been discussed in detail at the meeting and added “when speaking of a settlement in Cyprus we should keep in mind that ... [w]hat is important is what the people who live on this island want. Let us never forget that”.

Following a meeting between Anastasiades and Tsipras on December 14, where the Greek prime minister briefed Anastasiades on the outcome of his talks with Erdogan, the Cypriot government announced that Nicosia and Athens are in complete agreement, and subsequently any new conference on Cyprus should be preceded by thorough preparation. The two leaders agreed that Nicosia and Athens will continue their close contact and will coordinate on any future steps concerning the Cyprus Problem.

Meanwhile, Turkish Cypriot daily newspaper 'Star Kibris' reported on December 15 that Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim stated, following a meeting with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, that "it is too late to revive the Cyprus issue". Yildirim reportedly told Johnson that Turkey wants a lifting of embargoes on Turkish Cypriots and for both sides to discuss things as equal partners, otherwise the Cyprus issue will not be resolved.

On December 18, during budget discussions at the Turkish parliament, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stated that it was important to take steps towards the recognition of the TRNC<sup>1</sup>. Cavusoglu called on the Turkish gov-

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<sup>1</sup> 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,

ernment and opposition "to work together to make the TRNC passport valid in more countries and open up more representations in cities around the world". Cavusoglu added that Ankara was not responsible for the collapse of the Cyprus negotiations in Crans-Montana in July and that they had concluded a solution would not be possible within the current parameters. The foreign minister added that Turkey will discuss with the Turkish Cypriot authorities for future steps to be taken once elections in the north were held.

In an interview given on Greece's state television ERT on December 19, Greek Foreign Minister Nicos Kotzias, revealed that Erdogan and Cavusoglu had accepted the need to have exploratory discussions to determine whether convergences could be achieved between the guarantor powers.

The Turkish Cypriot presidential spokesperson Baris Burcu issued a statement criticizing the President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani who held contacts in the southern part of Cyprus but did not cross to the north to meet with Turkish Cypriot officials during his visit to the island. "Mr. Tajani should not forget that the Turkish Cypriots are one of the two equal communities on the island who have as much say as Greek Cypriots in this country" Burcu

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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).

said. After arguing that the President of the European Parliament should not refrain from holding contacts with Turkish Cypriots, he reminded that Tajani's predecessor Martin Schulz had received Akinci in his office at the European Parliament.

On several different occasions, the Turkish Cypriot foreign minister Tahsin Ertugruloglu reiterated his view that the prospect of negotiating a two-state solution would be on the horizon as an option in the near future.

## 2. Hydrocarbons

On December 5, Cyprus, Italy, Greece and Israel agreed to support the construction of a pipeline transferring natural gas from newly discovered fields in the eastern Mediterranean to Europe. The project, known as East Med, involves a 2,000km long pipeline to channel offshore reserves of the Levantine Basin in Eastern Mediterranean to Greece and Italy, at a cost of up to €6bn. The project will be covered at least in part by EU funds under the Connecting European Facility programme.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) outlining the political commitment of the four countries to pursue the project was signed during a ceremony in Nicosia by Cypriot Energy Minister, Yiorgos Lakkotrypis, and his counterparts from Greece Giorgos Stathakis, Israel Yuval Steinitz and by the Ambassador of Italy in

Cyprus, Andrea Cavallari<sup>2</sup>. According to the joint statement, the MoU and the quadrilateral discussions held, "confirmed our intention [the four countries] to cooperate in enabling and enhancing the development and the implementation of the EastMed Pipeline Project, as a viable and strategic option and an infrastructure of special interest for gas producing States and the EU". It added that the project would secure a direct long-term export route from Israel and Cyprus to Greece, Italy and other European markets as an additional element of the Eastern Mediterranean Corridor, thereby strengthening EU's security of supply, while promoting competition among gas suppliers. The four countries agreed to facilitate studies, permits, construction and operation of the project, with a view to sign an Intergovernmental Agreement on the project within 2018. Currently, Israel has discovered more than 900 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas while Cyprus' Aphrodite gas field holds an additional 128bcm. It is estimated that the pipeline could transport somewhere between 12-16bcm of gas per year. The project owners are IGI Poseidon, a joint venture between Greece's natural gas firm DEPA and Italian energy group Edison. The parties have set a target of 2025 for completion of the project.

On December 28, the Saipem 12000 deep water drillship arrived in block 6 of the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) where it is scheduled

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<sup>2</sup> The Italian energy minister did not attend due to a technical problem with his flight.

to commence exploratory drilling in the Calypso gas well. The drillship has been leased by the consortium of Italy's ENI and France's TOTAL which have the licence for block 6. The operations in block 6 are expected to conclude by early February 2018, after which the drillship will almost immediately head to block 3, also licensed to ENI, for another exploratory drill. The target in block 3 is codenamed 'Soupia' (cuttlefish). In the summer of 2017, an exploratory well drilled in block 11 by the ENI and TOTAL consortium came up with approximately half a trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas, deemed not commercially viable. In the summer of 2018, the consortium comprising ExxonMobil and Qatar will be drilling two exploratory wells in block 10.

Block 6 is claimed to partially fall within the outer limits of the Turkish continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey responded to the arrival of the Saipem drillship in Block 6 by issuing a marine notice and dispatching the Turkish research vessel, *Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa* to begin seismic surveys northeast of Cypriot waters starting from December 29 until March 2018. In a statement, Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that in the absence of a solution to the Cyprus problem 'it is unacceptable that the Greek Cypriot side persists in acting as though it were the sole owner of the Island and continues with its unilateral hydrocarbon-related activities'. Moreover, in an effort to protect the rights of Turkish Cypriots, Turkey is preparing for various exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean including areas

where Turkish Petroleum has granted exploration permits by the TRNC. A Turkish warship was also spotted at a considerable distance without making any attempt to intercept the drillship. *Reports claimed that* a drillship leased by Turkey, the DeepSea Metro II, was also making its way through the Mediterranean. The TRNC foreign ministry also reacted by issuing a statement according to which the prospect of negotiating a two-state solution could be on the horizon as an option in the near future. It stressed that the planned hydrocarbon drilling by the Greek Cypriots ignored the rights of Turkish Cypriots and showed that they considered themselves the island's only legitimate owner. The statement warned that unless hydrocarbon activities proceed through a mutually agreed framework or are frozen completely, the Turkish Cypriot side, alongside motherland and guarantor Turkey, will take all necessary measures to secure their rights and interests.

### 3. Greek Cypriots

#### Economic Developments

After three days of debate in Parliament the state budget for 2018 was approved on December 13. It was passed with 30 votes in favour and 26 against. It provides for €7.53bn in expenditure, the largest part of which will be allocated towards staff, budgeted at €2.62bn. It also provides €1.9bn for transfers, including social benefits, and €825 m for operating

expenses, as well as €496m for debt servicing expenses. It outlines €7.72bn in revenue, the main sources of which will be income taxes, estimated to amount to €3.1bn and direct taxes at €2.2bn.

On December 20, the Treasury of the Republic announced that Cyprus has transferred more than €2.5bn to the European Union and received €1.4bn in grants since 2004 when it became an EU member.

In an economic bulletin published by the Central Bank of Cyprus (CBC) the supervisor expects that growth will slow down from 3.8% in 2017 to 3.4% in 2018 and to 3.1% in 2020. The CBC furthermore expects that the unemployment rate will fall from 10.2% in 2017 to 9.8% in 2018 and to 7% by 2020. Meanwhile according to Vincenzo Guzzo, the resident representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Cyprus, the recovery of the Cypriot economy has failed to produce the expected drop in delinquent loans. His views were echoed by George Syrichas, one of the Central Bank of Cyprus's executive directors, who argued that the drop by €6bn in bad loans since 2014 to below €22bn, was still not enough as the economy grows. Non-performing loans (NPLs) in the Cypriot banking system, account for 45% of total loans and are considered the most significant risk for Cyprus's economic recovery. Cyprus modernised its foreclosure and insolvency framework as part of its agreement with the IMF, the European Commission and the European Central bank. Still, the unpopular

foreclosure law has been rendered toothless and the Central Bank of Cyprus has repeatedly asked for it to be improved.

The Public Debt Management Office (PDMO), a division of the finance ministry announced that it has selected seven international investment banks to help develop an "efficient" secondary market for Cypriot government securities. In particular, Barclays Bank, Citi, Goldman Sachs International, HSBC, J. P. Morgan, Morgan Stanley and Société Générale Corporate & Investment Banking "will be asked to take on the role of lead manager in the Republic's syndications in the international market and will work closely with the PDMO in order to further develop a well-functioning and efficient secondary market for the sovereign bonds of the Republic of Cyprus". The seven financial groups will consult the government in various ways including with respect to the timing of future bond issues. They will also help attract new investors and make Cypriot bonds more visible in the secondary market in an attempt to help reduce yields.

An overall positive picture of the Cypriot economy, notwithstanding specific challenges, was drawn by the speakers of an Economist event called 'Cyprus: Regaining Momentum – Targeting Investment and Growth' held in London's Stock Exchange on December 14. Economist consultant editor John Andrews stated that, "things look rather healthy for Cyprus, but there remains the problem of the high percentage of non-performing loans." Peter Bofinger, an eco-

nomics professor and member of the German council of economic experts noted that Cyprus's recovery was faster in comparison to other economies in South Eastern Europe because the island's economy is more open. Anthony De Lannoy, IMF executive director for Cyprus presented the stand-out factors of the country's recovery: the GDP growth, the achieved fiscal balance, the regained capital markets access, the credit rating improvement and the restructuring of the banking sector. He pointed to the high private debt and the non-performing loans as the main challenges. Servaas Deroose, of the European Commission, spoke of a "remarkable turnaround" and a "vibrant momentum", but he added the need for enhanced productivity among the challenges. The Bank of Cyprus UK, CEO Nick Fahy presented the work that his bank has done following the crisis and said that more time is needed to deal with the high NPLs. He also stressed the high compliance standards of the Cypriot banking sector. Speaking on behalf of Moody's, Colin Ellis, the rating agency's chief credit officer for EMEA, said that we have seen a very strong turnaround in Cyprus and he expressed the view that the country faces no risk of default. The last part of the conference examined the competitive advantages of Cyprus as an investment destination. Among the speakers were Natasa Pilides, director general of CIPA and Evgenios Evgeniou, CEO of PwC Cyprus. The EBRD deputy director Bojan Markovic said that the bank has already invested €270m in Cyprus over the last two years. James Ker-Lindsay, a close observer of the

Cyprus issue spoke about the latest developments in the pursuit of a viable settlement. He commented that the sense that the talks could resume quickly after the presidential elections are not justified in his view. He also expressed concern at the fact that the Cyprus issue dynamics can no longer be understood under the calculation that Turkey is following a European path and described President Erdogan's recent visit to Athens as "an unmitigated disaster".

### **Domestic Developments**

The 9 contenders for the January 28 Presidential elections submitted their candidacies on December 28. Each candidate was proposed by one person and supported by another 100. A run-off election between the two candidates with the highest share of votes is set for February 4 if no candidate wins 50% plus one vote. The contenders are in alphabetical order:

- Incumbent Nicos Anastasiades, seeking reelection backed by DISY;
- Harris Aristidou, independent;
- Christos Christou, leader of the far-right ELAM
- Andreas Efstratiou, independent;
- Christakis Kapilliotis, independent;
- George Lillikas, leader of the Citizen Alliance Movement
- Stavros Malas, independent supported by AKEL;
- Michalis Mina, independent;

- Nikolas Papadopoulos, leader of DIKO and backed by socialist EDEK, the Green Party, and the Solidarity Movement<sup>3</sup>

According to polls, from the seven candidates only three, Nicos Anastasiades, Stavros Malas and Nikolas Papadopoulos stand a chance of being elected. The incumbent Anastasiades is the clear favourite to be re-elected and will certainly make it to the second round without a chance to win in the first. Malas and Papadopoulos are competing with each other to make it to the second round and whoever succeeds will then challenge Anastasiades.

A report about the upcoming elections written by Christophoros Christophorou has just been published by FES and can be found at: [http://www.fescyprus.org/media/publications/2018/FES-Report\\_-\\_Presidential\\_Elections\\_in\\_Cyprus.pdf](http://www.fescyprus.org/media/publications/2018/FES-Report_-_Presidential_Elections_in_Cyprus.pdf).

### **Labour Relations and Trade Unions**

DEDE, the union of adjunct academics has officially decided to take strike action at the University of Cyprus as a result of unwillingness of the university authorities to implement the agreement they reached with DEDE last June. The union of academics at the second public university TEPAK has issued a statement supporting the demands and the strike of DEDE at the University of Cyprus, expected to take place in January.

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<sup>3</sup> A profile of each candidate can be found at: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/12/27/presidential-hopefuls-not-see-eye-eye-key-issues/>

An agreement in principle has been reached by the social partners at the Labour Advisory Council that widow men should also be entitled to public support. The relevant bill will soon be submitted to the council of ministers for approval. The discussion about the reinstatement of the right to sick leave and to unemployment benefit of those working and being in the age range 63-65 was not concluded. The Minister was positive about the sick leave while the issue of the unemployment benefit remains open.

The parliament has postponed the government's bill to counter undeclared work and to supervise minimum wage and hotel and restaurant's legislation. The contested issues were the increased fines stipulated and the authority to be given to the inspectors that would be hired on a sale of services basis.

ETYK had a one-hour strike in all the banks and a march to the Presidential Palace protesting against the treatment of its members' Provident Fund by the government which it considers unfair and damaging to its members. ETYK demands compensation of the losses incurred in its Provident Fund and states that this has been pending for four years.

The first unified collective agreement operating retrospectively for 2016 has been signed in the municipal authorities. From the 30 different collective agreements for the staff of the municipalities and the 30 collective agreements for the hourly paid staff, there will be from now on just



two collective agreements on a national basis, one for each category of staff. The negotiation for the terms of these two new collective agreements covering 2017-2018 has now begun and is expected to be concluded by the spring of 2018. PEO and SEK aim to achieve wage increases in order to cover the cuts made during the crisis and to include all those currently excluded into the Provident Fund.

The labour dispute on UN premises remained unresolved, with the workers made redundant by UN's subcontractors marching to the Labour Ministry and demanding the intervention its intervention. The response of the Labour Relations Department with respect to the demand issued by PEO and SEK is still pending.

The final verdict of the Nicosia District Court concerning the law suit filed by the National Bank of Greece against ETYK for a strike the trade union led in 2007 in the bank's premises has been issued. The bank has not only lost the case and will not receive the 700.000€ it demanded as compensation but will also now have to pay the expenses of the whole court procedure. ETYK considers this a major political victory as well as it constitutes a block to the attempt by some employers to criminalize strike action and by-pass the Industrial Relations Code and the institutions of labour relations.

SEK has issued a statement in support of the Minister of Finance declaration that a decrease in taxes is due in 2018.

A strike took place in the beginning of December in the Paphos buses as for once more bus drivers were not paid on time and yet again the company and the Ministry of Transport disagreed with respect to the size and timing of the state subsidy.

The COLA to be added on salaries in 2018, estimated according to the price index of a bundle of goods, is expected to be 0.3% - 0.35% (that is 50% of the 0.6%-0.7% which is the actual impact of inflation on purchasing power) and thus the waged who receive this benefit will see little difference in their actual income.

Poverty remains high for a fourth consecutive year threatening more than one quarter of the population of Cyprus with the elderly, women and children as being more vulnerable.

A spontaneous strike took place by the cleaners at Limassol General Hospital protesting against the refusal of their employer to allow them take their paid leave and their entitlement in time off because of under-staffing. PEO supported the striking women and issued a warning that the exhaustion of the cleaning staff threatens not only the health and safety of the personnel but also of the patients.

## 4. Turkish Cypriots

### Economic Developments

According to the latest figures announced by the state planning organization, the cost of liv-

ing went up by 12.78% compared to November 2017.

According to the Turkish Cypriot weekly 'Cyprus Today's' report, due to lack of competition for flights to and from Ercan (Tymbou) airport, and the double taxes and charges that arise due to the requirement to touchdown in Turkey (no direct flight is allowed to the northern part of Cyprus), the costs of airline tickets have skyrocketed. According to one account, the best price for a return ticket from Ercan to London was up to 40% more expensive than the cheapest available flight from Larnaca airport. The paper quoted the head of Cyprus Turkish Travel Agents' Union as saying politicians needed to act so that a 15% increase in tourist numbers over the last year was not undone. Following the bankruptcy of the national carrier Cyprus Turkish Airlines, currently only 3 companies are flying to Ercan.

According to the quarterly bulletin of the Turkish Cypriot Central Bank, in July-August period of 2017, the exports rose by 19,53% to USD 15,2 million, while the imports increased by 1,05% to reach USD 127,4 million compared to the same period in 2016. The biggest trade partner of the TRNC in 2017 was as usual Turkey. Turkey's share of imports until the end of July reached 60,3% followed by the EU countries with 20%. In the period between January and August, Turkey accounted for 64,6% of the exports followed by Middle Eastern and Arab countries with 20,3%. The EU countries' share in exports was only 3.6%.

### **Relations with Turkey**

The Turkish Deputy Prime Minister in Charge of Cyprus Affairs Recep Akdag said that Turkey would be drawing a new roadmap with the TRNC regarding a political settlement in Cyprus. However, he also added that he prioritized boosting the TRNC's economic development and raising its living standards. Speaking in a different occasion Akdag said that he hoped that a stable government could be formed following the January elections.

### **Domestic Developments**

According to the Higher Electoral Council (HEC), 190,551 TRNC citizens will be eligible to vote in the general election set to take place on 7 January 2018. Previously the number of voters had been announced as 188,688 but the figure was revised following objections filed during the mandatory 7-day waiting period for applications and objections to the voting lists. The distribution of voters per district is as follows: 61,062 voters in Nicosia; 48,380 in Famagusta; 39,784 in Kyrenia; 14,841 in Morphou (Guzelyurt); 19,775 in Trikomo (İskele) and 6,709 in Lefka (Lefke).

Voters will be able to cast their votes at 719 ballot boxes, where 2,157 people will be in charge of overseeing the voting process. 388 candidates of whom 120 are women, and 9 independents, will be competing for the 50 seats in parliament. The HEC announced early in the month that the following 8 political parties

would take part in the elections: National Unity Party (UBP), Republican Turkish Party (CTP), Democratic Party (DP), Social Democratic Party (TDP), People's Party (HP), Rebirth Party (YDP), Communal Liberation Party-New Forces (TKP-YG), and the Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP).

In the campaign trail, the UBP leader Huseyin Ozgurgun criticised the former coalition partners CTP for pushing the relations with Turkey towards a total breakdown in a dispute over the management of water transferred from Turkey, while the former president and honorary chairperson of the party Dervis Eroglu boasted that the UBP was "the party, which created the state" and it was "seeking to safeguard and develop" it. Throughout the campaign, the UBP used the slogan "We are One," which meant in Ozgurgun's words, "we are one for our country, for our republic and for unity with motherland Turkey". The main opposition CTP based its campaign on the one hand, on bringing an end to the "corrupt system created by the UBP [and to a lesser extent by DP]", and on promoting an economic and social development program, which will boost domestic production, on the other. Additionally, the former chief negotiator Kudret Ozersay targeted the UBP government and urged a vote for his HP to "do away with lawlessness, corruption and malpractice".

On December 19, the Turkish Cypriot parliament voted unanimously to extend the mandate of the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) by another two years. The IPC was set up

in accordance with the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) with a view to establishing an effective domestic remedy for Greek Cypriots claims relating to their properties abandoned in northern part of Cyprus in 1974. "Extending its mission for another two years is not enough. What is important is what is done during those two years. The new government, once formed, must focus on generating revenues and funds so that the commission can work faster, produce results and implement those results," Akinci said in response to the decision.

In the meantime, on December 12, the ECHR unanimously upheld a complaint filed by a Greek Cypriot refugee against Turkey over the lack of effectiveness of the IPC to which she had applied for compensation for her property in 2008. According to the ECHR decision, "the applicant's complaint that the proceedings by which she sought compensation for her property located in the "TRNC" had been protracted and ineffective, under Article 1 of Protocol No. 1". The court said, however, that their ruling concerned the particular case only and is "not calling into question the effectiveness of the IPC remedy as such".

The Turkish Cypriot daily Afrika came under fire after publishing a controversial cartoon deemed "insulting" to Turkey's President Erdogan. Published originally in a Greek newspaper, the cartoon depicted a Greek statue urinating on the head of Erdogan. The Turkish Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Cyprus affairs called on

Turkish Cypriot officials to take legal action against the newspaper and Turkish Embassy in Nicosia lodged a formal complaint over what it said was the “obvious and public defamation” of the Turkish president. The embassy also criticised Afrika for practising “biased journalism”. Turkish Cypriot prime minister Huseyin Ozgurgun condemned the cartoon and said that he would personally see that legal measures were taken against the daily. Parties and groups of Turkish nationals staged protests outside the offices of Afrika, some of them throwing eggs at the building that houses the daily. In response, several political parties and trade unions spoke out in support of Afrika and the freedom of expression. Sener Levent who dismissed the whole affair as a storm in a teacup, criticised Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci for not taking a stance on the issue.

According to Turkish Cypriot weekly ‘Cyprus Today’, 142 refugees, mostly from Syria, had been picked up by the police in 2017 after reaching the northern part of Cyprus illicitly, compared to the figure of 60 in 2016. The police said 105 of the refugees were deported to Turkey while 37 were passed onto the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The report added that the number of refugees arriving through legal ports of entry had almost halved; 83 refugees were put into the care of the UNHCR so far this year, compared to 159 last year. It is unclear what has happened to them since.

### **Labour Relations and Trade Unions**

Following rising complaints about the poor quality of postal services, the KTAMS (Civil Servants Union) chairperson Ahmet Kaptan said, recruitment to the directorate of postal services had stalled since 1989, leaving it with half the staff it should have, and warned of industrial action unless the upcoming government gave the directorate the attention it deserved.

## **5. FES Cyprus Events**

### **January 2018**

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### **February 2018**

--- no events ---



**Imprint:**

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

Office Cyprus

20, Stasandrou, Apt. 401

CY 1060 Nicosia

Tel. +357 22 377 336

Email: [office@fescyprus.org](mailto:office@fescyprus.org)

Web-Seite: [www.fescyprus.org](http://www.fescyprus.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/FESCyprus](https://www.facebook.com/FESCyprus)

Twitter : @FESCyprus

**Text:**

Hubert Faustmann, Yiannis Charalambous,  
Sertac Sonan, Grigoris Ioannou, and Sophia  
Papastavrou

**Layout:**

Christiane Paparoditi

If you want to subscribe or unsubscribe to this (free)  
monthly newsletter, please send an email to:

Christiana Paparoditi [fespaparoditi@gmail.com](mailto:fespaparoditi@gmail.com)