

Motion

The Cyprus Problem: Its international dimension and how young Cypriots are affected by it

signed by: Cyprus Youth Council (CYC)

co-signed by: National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS), National Youth Council of Malta (KNZ), Hellenic National Youth Council (ESYN), Romanian National Youth Council (CTR), National Youth Forum of Bulgaria (NYF)

In the modern era, where instability and conflict rule much of international relations, it is vital, now more than ever, to preserve respect for human rights. In the sphere of recent developments, such as the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine, the re-escalation of the conflict in Caucasus area, the ongoing conflicts in African countries and in Yemen, and the once more re-escalation of the violence and war in Middle East and in Gaza, an old “frozen conflict” remains forgotten for much of the world, and that is the Cyprus Problem. The Cyprus Problem dates back decades with one of the main points of aggravation were the intercommunal riots of 1963-1964, which led to the adoption of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 186.¹ The aforementioned resolution calls for the cessation of hostilities and, with the consent of the Government of Cyprus, the deployment of a UN Peacekeeping Force to prevent the recurrence of violence and for the Republic of Cyprus to take the responsibility to restore law and order to prevent further violence in Cyprus.

The most important point which defines the Cyprus Problem as it exists today, is the illegal Turkish invasion of the Republic of Cyprus in 1974, forcing Cypriot citizens to become ‘internally displaced’ and resulting in the ongoing illegal occupation of approximately 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. The Turkish illegal invasion constitutes a clear violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations (Türkiye is a founding member) and numerous resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly (GA) and the Security Council (SC) of the United Nations (UN). The most important UNSC resolutions concerning the illegal Turkish invasion are 353², 360³ and 367⁴, which condemn all military action taken against the Republic of Cyprus and call for the withdrawal of all foreign military personnel from the island – among other provisions.

The SC, in Resolution 541⁵ (1983), rebuked the unilateral declaration of the so-called “*Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*”, declared it legally invalid, and

called for its reversal. The SC called on all states to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus and not to recognize any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus. The SC also adopted Resolution 550⁶ (1984) reaffirming Resolution 541 (1983) and reiterating its call on all states not to recognize the entity established by the separatist actions and, at the same time, called on them not to facilitate or in any way assist the separatist entity.

The solution to the Cyprus Problem is sought through peace talks held under the auspices of the United Nations as part of the UN Secretary-General’s good offices mission.

The year 2024 marks 50 years since Türkiye’s illegal invasion and continued occupation of 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. The only sustainable solution to the Cyprus issue is a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement, within the UN framework, on the basis of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation, with a single sovereignty, single citizenship and single international personality with political equality, as set out in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in accordance with international law and the principles on which the European Union is founded. The solution must provide for the complete withdrawal of the presence of foreign troops and the anachronistic system of guarantees and intervention rights of any foreign state. No purported alternative solution for the creation of two states on the island of Cyprus can be accepted.

It is essential to mention that the Republic of Cyprus became officially a full member state of the European Union on the 1st of May 2004. Notably, the entire island is considered part of the territory of the EU, even though the Republic of Cyprus de facto does not exercise control over the occupied territories.

The Cyprus Youth Council (CYC) envision a free and reunited Cyprus, a common homeland of all Cypriots (G/C & T/C), and religious groups (Armenians, Maronites and Latins), as it is stated in

1 <https://peacemaker.un.org/cyprus-resolution186>

2 <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/353>

3 <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/360>

4 <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/367>

5 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/58970?ln=en>

6 <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/550>

the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, a model of peaceful coexistence and prosperity for all its citizens and a pillar of stability, peace and security in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Having provided the historical background regarding the Cyprus problem, it is important to connect this with the purpose of this motion.

The Cyprus Youth Council was founded in 1996, acting as the official coordinating body of youth organizations representing them to the Republic of Cyprus, and serving as a representative body of Cypriot youth in international and European fora, advocating for youth rights and youth participation. Today, the Cyprus Youth Council numbers 61 Member Organisations including all the youth organizations of the political parties, the Cypriot Student Coordinating Committee, the Cyprus Youth Clubs Association, the Pancyprian Federation of Student Unions, the youth trade unions, the agricultural organizations, a large number of Non-Governmental Youth Organisations, TurkishCypriot youth organizations, and the youth departments of the three religious' groups of the island.

The CYC has been advocating for the rights of both communities on the island since its existence, putting Cypriot youth in the spotlight, advocating for the rights of young people across the island, and promoting peacebuilding between young people, and promoting policy recommendations.

As this suggests, the CYC is cooperating with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), trying to build the peaceful co-existence of the youth in Cyprus through the organization of numerous joint events, actions, activities such as "Mula Moat Film Days", basketball games during the European Week of Sports (#BeActive program) etc., and many other conferences between the youth and the youth organizations of the two communities. Moreover, due to the fact that there is no freedom of movement across the division for many young people, CYC organizes all its main events in the Buffer Zone, an area patrolled by UNFICYP, for all young people residing on the island to have access to and participate. At last, it is worth mentioning that the CYC guarantees the participation of young people from both communities in its Youth Ambassadorship

schemes, including the Youth Ambassadors of the EU Youth Dialogue.

Another action on behalf of the CYC on the promotion of reconciliation activities through the representation of Cyprus at European conferences/fora/ events with the participation of all the communities of the island, making sure that there is always bi-communal representation when the CYC is representing young people on an EU level, such as LevelUp in 2022, European Youth Event 2023, etc. Finally, CYC is actively working with Turkish-Cypriot youth NGOs, including its Member Organisations, in order to further support those that are not members in becoming Members of the Cyprus Youth Council and having full access to their rights as Member Organisations.

Therefore, the European Youth Forum and its Member Organisations, namely the National Youth Councils and the International Non-Governmental Youth Organizations:

1. Recognise that the Cyprus problem is a problem of illegal invasion and ongoing occupation of approximately 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus from Turkey.
2. Act in line with the UN Security Council Resolutions, the European Court of Human Rights decisions on the issue of the Cyprus Problem and the UN Youth, Peace and Security agenda.
3. Condemn the violation of human rights and therefore youth rights on the island.
4. Reaffirm and declare full support to the CYC's efforts on peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts across the island.
5. Recognise CYC as the direct and/or indirect representative body of all young people of the island at all levels, that stands for the rights of all Cypriot youth, in close collaboration with youth organisations from all the communities in the island.
6. Call upon the initiation of the negotiations for a solution to be found per the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions based on a bi-zonal, bicomunal federal model for Cyprus.



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