

Motion

The Cyprus Problem: Its International Dimension and the Role of Young People

signed by: Cyprus Youth Council (CYC)

co-signed by: Croatian Youth Network (MMH),
European Democrat Students (EDS), Forum des
Jeunes (FJ), Hellenic National Youth Council (ESYN),
National Youth Council of Catalonia (CNJC), National
Youth Council of Malta (KNZ), National Youth Council
of Serbia (KOMS), National Youth Council of Slovenia
(MSS), National Youth Forum of Bulgaria (NYF),
Portuguese National Youth Council (CNJ), Romanian
National Youth Council (CTR), Spanish Youth Council
(CJE), World Esperanto Youth Organisation (TEJO),
Young Democrats for Europe (YDE), Young European
Federalists (JEF Europe), Youth of the European
Peoples Party (YEPP)

Introduction

In today's global landscape of instability and conflict, marked by the rise of populism, authoritarianism and the continued erosion of democratic values and the rule of law, the protection of human rights and respect for international law are more crucial than ever. While the international community's attention is focused on conflicts such as the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine and the delicate ceasefire and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, one of Europe's oldest "frozen conflicts" remains unresolved: the Cyprus Problem.

The Cyprus Problem dates back decades, with one of the first major aggravations being the intercommunal riots of 1963–1964, which led to the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 186¹ and the deployment of a UN Peacekeeping Force to Cyprus.

The most defining moment came in 1974, with the illegal Turkish invasion of the Republic of Cyprus, which resulted in the occupation of approximately 37% of its territory. This invasion, and the continued military presence, constitute a clear violation of international law, the UN Charter on Human Rights, and multiple UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including Resolutions 353², 360³, and 367⁴, which demand the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the island.

In 1983, the Turkish Cypriot leadership unilaterally declared the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus". This entity has been condemned by the UN Security Council through Resolutions 541⁵ and 550⁶ as legally invalid and recognised only by Türkiye. The Republic of Cyprus remains the sole internationally recognised entity on the island and represents Cyprus within the UN and the European Union.

The only sustainable solution to the Cyprus Problem is a fair, comprehensive, and viable settlement within the framework of the UN: a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, a single sovereignty, single citizenship, and single international

personality, as outlined in relevant UN Security Council resolutions, in line with international law and the principles of the European Union. This framework has been jointly agreed by the leaders of the two communities since the High-Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979, and has been repeatedly reaffirmed in subsequent rounds of negotiations and UN Security Council resolutions. The solution must ensure the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the abolition of the outdated system of guarantees, and full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, as consistently supported by the international community and the European Union. Any proposed "two-state" solution is incompatible with UN resolutions and international law and cannot be accepted.

Recent Developments

The year 2025 marked 51 years since the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus. Despite the continued uncompromising stance of Türkiye, new diplomatic efforts have been undertaken:

- **Geneva Talks (March 2025):** After eight years of stalemate in the negotiations, President Christodoulides and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr Tatar, held informal discussions in the presence of the three guarantor powers, as defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus (Greece, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom), as well as the United Nations (5+1 talks). These discussions produced some encouraging developments, including the appointment of a UN Special Envoy to explore prospects for the resumption of talks, deliberations on the reopening of additional crossing points, initiatives for de-mining in various areas and the promotion of joint renewable energy projects within the Buffer Zone.
- **5-Party Conference, New York (July 2025):** Held under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, followed by a bilateral meeting between

1 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/112185?v=pdf>

2 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/93470?v=pdf>

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

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

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

6 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/67600?v=pdf>

President Christodoulides and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. The EU reaffirmed strong support for the UN-led process.

- **UN Secretary-General's Statement:** António Guterres welcomed the constructive atmosphere of the recent discussions and announced the implementation of a series of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), including the establishment of the Technical Committee on Youth in June 2025, a development that was broadly acknowledged as a positive step towards enhancing youth participation in the peace process. During a brief meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2025, the Secretary-General reaffirmed his commitment to resuming negotiations from the point where they were left off in 2017 and called for the formal relaunch of the talks in November.
- **Continuing Challenges:** Despite renewed diplomatic efforts, Türkiye and the previous Turkish Cypriot leadership persist in promoting the narrative of a “two-state” solution, which is fundamentally incompatible with UN Security Council resolutions and international law. Notably, on 19 October, a change in the Turkish Cypriot leadership took place, and it remains to be seen how developments will unfold. At the same time, the occupation army continues to violate the rights of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in the occupied areas and the buffer zone, while pursuing plans to further increase its already extensive military presence. Türkiye's reported decision⁷ to increase its troop numbers constitutes a serious provocation, heightens mistrust, and undermines efforts to create a climate conducive to negotiations. Furthermore, in July 2025, five Greek Cypriots were illegally arrested by the occupation authorities while visiting their properties, facing serious human rights violations. In response, the European Parliament adopted, on 11 September 2025, a resolution (2025/2860(RSP))⁸ condemning the actions of the occupying regime and calling for the immediate release of the detainees, as

well as full respect for human rights and EU law in the occupied areas of Cyprus.

These negative developments underline the urgent need for renewed international support and vigilance, as double standards in addressing violations of international law undermine both peace efforts and the credibility of international institutions. Selective sensitivity and an “à la carte” approach to the application of international law are unacceptable and weaken the rules-based international order.

The Role of the Cyprus Youth Council (CYC)

Founded in 1996, the Cyprus Youth Council (CYC) is the representative platform of youth organisations on the island, comprising 61 member organisations, including youth wings of political parties, student unions, youth NGOs, trade union youth structures and youth organisations of the Armenians, Maronites and Latins (religious groups). Crucially, the CYC also includes Turkish Cypriot youth organisations as members.

The CYC has consistently advocated for the rights of all young people in Cyprus, working toward peace-building and reconciliation across the divide. It has taken extensive steps to ensure inclusivity of Turkish Cypriot youth, including:

- encouraging Turkish Cypriot organisations to join the CYC,
- running bicomunal projects (e.g., EU Youth Dialogue Ambassadors, Home for Cooperation activities, BeActive Festival, Level-Up, and EYE participation),
- translating materials into Turkish,
- ensuring recently that Turkish Cypriot organisations can submit motions in the General Assembly of the CYC in Turkish, and
- advocating for the establishment of another dedicated youth space under the auspices of the UN

7 <https://defencesecurityasia.com/en/turkey-doubles-troops-northern-cyprus-israel-threats-blue-homeland/>
<https://www.thenationalherald.com/turkey-said-ready-to-boost-troops-force-on-cyprus-to-100000/>

8 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-09-11_EN.html

to foster sustained cooperation and dialogue between the two communities.

In spring 2025, the CYC launched a new round of discussions with Turkish Cypriot organisations to deepen cooperation.

The CYC envisions a free and reunited Cyprus, a common homeland of all Cypriots — Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Armenians, Maronites, and Latins — as foreseen in the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, serving as a model of peaceful coexistence, stability, and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Youth Declaration on the Cyprus Problem

In light of renewed efforts to relaunch negotiations, the Cyprus Youth Council finalised and disseminated in June 2025 a joint Youth Declaration on the Cyprus Problem⁹, co-signed by 25 youth organisations from both communities under the title *“A Declaration of Unity: Empowering Youth Voices in Cyprus.”*

The Declaration builds on (a) the UN Security Council resolutions, (b) the UN Youth, Peace & Security framework (Resolutions 2250, 2419, 2535), (c) the Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding, and (d) the CYC’s historic positions on bicomunal cooperation.

Through this Declaration, young people across the island jointly call upon the leaders of both communities to:

- include youth in formal negotiations and technical committees,
- commit to a democratic, fair, functional, and sustainable solution in line with UN and EU principles,
- work towards a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with single sovereignty, single citizenship, and single international personality,
- foster confidence-building measures, including youth dialogue spaces in the Buffer Zone, and

- refrain from rhetoric or actions that undermine the negotiation process.

This Declaration demonstrates the determination of Cypriot youth to actively contribute to peace-building. It highlights the demographic imperative of including youth voices in decision-making, as well as the consensus among several youth organisations across the island.

The Role of the European Youth Forum (YFJ)

As the broadest platform representing youth in Europe, the European Youth Forum has a statutory obligation to uphold and protect its founding principles, including democracy, peace, human rights, and the rule of law. The Cyprus Problem is a test of these principles.

We call upon the European Youth Forum and its Member Organisations to:

1. Remain consistent in condemning illegal occupations, acts of aggression and human rights violations, in line with statutory principles, and to apply these principles uniformly.
2. Recognise that the Cyprus Problem is one of illegal invasion and continued occupation of 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus by Türkiye.
3. Act in line with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, European Court of Human Rights judgments, and the UN Youth, Peace and Security agenda.
4. Condemn ongoing violations of human rights and youth rights resulting from the occupation.
5. Reaffirm and declare full support to the CYC’s peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts across the island.
6. Recognise the CYC as the direct and/or indirect representative body of all Cypriot youth, working inclusively with youth organisations from all communities.

⁹ <https://cyc.org.cy/youth-declaration/>

7. Discourage any attempts to recognise or promote parallel youth representative bodies in the occupied areas that misrepresent Cypriot youth at the European and international levels and undermine ongoing reconciliation efforts.



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