

What Now for Cyprus Re-Unification? : A post-EU Accession and Annan Plan Analysis

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Refereed paper presented to the
Australasian Political Studies Association Conference
University of Adelaide
29 September - 1 October 2004

The Cyprus problem has been an international issue even before the former British colony gained its independence in 1960. The struggle between the island's two main ethnic groups, the Greek Cypriot majority and the Turkish Cypriot minority, has always been at the forefront of Cypriot, as well as Greek and Turkish politics. The constant nationalistic pressures by both communities, led to an early faltering of the infantile Republic of Cyprus and its political institutions, which by 1963, saw the Turkish Cypriot minority pullout of all official mechanisms of the state, and effectively left governance of all but 3% of the island to Greek Cypriot authorities.¹ This was, argued the Turkish Cypriots, the first 'division' of the island. Until July 1974, the 18% Turkish minority in Cyprus were living mainly in heavily protected enclaves supported by Ankara, which few Greek Cypriots were allowed in, but this date also heralded the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, which was launched after a short lived Greek Cypriot coup on the island, which aimed to unite the island with Greece. The invasion, and subsequent occupation of 36% of the island by Turkish forces prompted a population exchange that resulted in the removal of 200,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes, and 40,000 Turkish Cypriots from theirs, partitioning the island into two ethnic enclaves.²

The Turkish invasion and occupation was condemned worldwide, and the Turkish Cypriots claim to independence through the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' in November in 1983 was declared to be 'legally invalid' by United Nations Security Council Resolution 541(1983), as is the situation today. Instead, the United Nations and the two sides have engaged periodically in dialogue and negotiations to reunify the island through a 'bi-zonal, bi-communal federation', concepts that both sides agreed to in principle in the high level agreements of 1977 and 1979.³ Since then, despite the efforts of the international community and the two communities to resolve the division of the island, a solution has eluded them. This, however, appeared to be changing with the most concentrated effort by the United Nations launched in January 2002, primarily as a result of the Republic of Cyprus' pending entry into the European Union in May 2004. The EU accession process, it was hoped, would become the catalyst for reunification, enhance the living standards of the Turkish Cypriots, as well as resolve many of the property and human rights issues important to the Greek Cypriots. Also, the urgency the international community was placing on a solution was partially due to the EU's reluctance to take on a member-state with such a significant political problem unresolved into the bloc.

¹ Hitchens, Christopher, 1984, Cyprus, Quartet Books, p.53-56

² Results of Invasion, 2004, Republic of Cyprus,

<http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/cyphome/govhome.nsf/Main?OpenFrameSet> [accessed 20/05/04]

³ Munro & Khuri, 1984, Cyprus : Between Venus & Mars, Caravan Books, p.146-47.

As the negotiations between the two leaders, Glafkos Clerides, President of Cyprus and representative of the Greek Cypriots, and Rauf Denktash, leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, were unable to agree to a basic solution framework. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, produced a reunification plan which he put to the two sides for negotiation on November 11th 2002. By April 2004, five iterations of the Annan Plan had been created, and the final plan was put to referendum to the two sides in Cyprus. The Annan Plan outlined the constitution, of some 9,000 pages, to create the 'United Cyprus Republic', the plan even included an anthem and flag. The Turkish Cypriots accepted it, with 65% voting in favour, whilst the Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly voted against the plan with a 76% margin.⁴ Had the plan been accepted, the UCR would have entered the European Union on May 1st, exactly one week later, but instead, only the Greek Cypriots entered as the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus, leaving the Turkish Cypriots officially EU citizens, but with the *Acquis Communitare* being suspended in the areas under their control.

This paper will focus on the reunification talks that began in early 2002 and continued through to March 2004, analyse why they failed, what the impact has been for both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities on the island, the new role of the EU on the island, and what lies ahead for possible reunification hopes for the island in the foreseeable future. The paper will argue that the international community invested much effort and resources into securing an agreement based on the Annan Plan, its rejection, although not unpredictable, would prove to be a turning point in the international communities policy vis-à-vis the Cyprus problem. For the first time since the Turkish invasion, it is the Turkish Cypriots who have garnered the worlds' sympathy through their acceptance of the plan, whilst the Greek Cypriots have lost much of the support they had enjoyed over the last 30 years. All in all, the United Nations, the United States and the European Union have all taken different approaches to the problem since the referendum, but each similarly reward the Turkish Cypriots for their positive vote, and have formulated practical policies to end the economic isolation of their community. These developments, it seems, will invariably change the shape of the reunification process, giving the Turkish Cypriots a moral high ground, and international support. The Greek Cypriots, on the other hand, have entered the EU as sole owners of the Republic of Cyprus which, they feel, should strengthen their own bargaining position. These developments have

⁴ Cyprus Spurns Historic Chance, April 2004, BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3656753.stm> [accessed 25/04/04]

both positives and negatives in relation to encouraging a resolution to the Cyprus problem, of which will be outlined throughout the paper.

The Cyprus problem had become synonymous in the international community with the phrase 'longest running intractable' problem the United Nations had been dealing with, especially since the United Nations was involved with the talks on independence throughout the 1950's, and UN peacekeepers were originally deployed in 1963 to keep the two sides apart in some areas of the island. Inter-communal negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot sides between 1963 and 1974 were not able to resolve some of the major challenges the island faced, which were created by some of the provisions of the 1959 agreements and the Republic of Cyprus constitution which gave the Turkish Cypriots, an 18% minority, effective veto power over most legislation through the Vice President of the Republic, who constitutionally had to be a Turkish Cypriot. Greek Cypriot attempts to alter the constitution, making it more workable in their view, were rejected by the Turkish Cypriots and Ankara, sparking a crisis, which ultimately turned violent. The tension between the two communities remained, but reached an uneasy peace after inter-communal violence in 1967, and it was not until the Turkish invasion in July 1974 that more violence befell the island.

One of the difficulties for the international community faced in encouraging reunification after the invasion was that the Turkish Cypriots, and Turkey, felt that the forced partition and segregation of the two communities was in fact in their best interests, and a separate Turkish Cypriot state in the north would only encourage stability. This position, therefore, did not lend itself favourably to the pressure of the international community for the resolution of the problem. For the Greek Cypriots, especially the 200,000 refugees, reclaiming their lost properties was the first priority, and a reunified Cyprus was the best way to achieve this. The international community also considered the best way forward was a reunified island, with power sharing arrangement between the two sides, but with one distinct difference to the 1960 constitution, any new united Cyprus would be within the framework of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with autonomous areas for both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. These principles were agreed to by the two communities in the Makarios – Denktash agreement in 1977, and Kyprianou – Denktash agreement in 1979. They have constituted the basis for any comprehensive agreement between the two sides ever since.

Although the United Nations had first formulated a semi-detailed plan in 1992, called the 'Ghali Set of Ideas' which was formulated by then Secretary General, Bhutros Bhutros Ghali, it had never really attempted anything remotely considered as a complete proposal to reunify the island, until

November 2002, when after 11 months of negotiations between the two communities leaders which had made little progress, Kofi Annan presented the 'Annan Plan' for Cyprus. The UN Secretary General requested that both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot sides respond to his comprehensive proposal within a week, he was to receive the following response,

On 18 November 2002, President Clerides handed the reply of the Greek Cypriot side to Mr De Soto [Annan's Special Envoy to Cyprus], expressing his readiness to start negotiations without any delay on the basis of the document that was before the two sides. The Turkish Cypriot side with a delay of nine days (27.11.2002) also replied that it accepted the document as a basis for negotiations.⁵

There were to be, eventually, five iterations of this plan, the final one, was partially the result of negotiations in Burgenstock, Switzerland, in March 2004 between the Cypriot President, Tassos Papadopoulos, and Turkish Cypriot 'Prime Minister' Mehmet Ali Talat, as well as the Prime Minister of Greece, newly elected Kostas Karamanlis and Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In addition to the main players listed above, also Gunter Verheugen the EU Commissioner for Enlargement also attended part of the negotiations, as would the UN Secretary General, with US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, been kept briefed by telephone by various participants.⁶ The international communities interest in the Burgenstock negotiations were unprecedented in the process to solve the Cyprus problem.

It was this process, which was supposed to finally break the deadlock in any issues of disagreement, unfortunately it did not, so UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, it was agreed by all parties, would 'fill in the gaps' in the plan where the sides could not agree on their own. On 27th March 2004, the Secretary-General arrived in Burgenstock to assist the negotiations, by the 29th March it was clear the negotiations were failing, so Annan decided to unveil a revised Cyprus plan that he said would "break the ice" in stalled reunification talks.⁷

In a statement following the release of revised plan, Kofi Annan pleaded with Cypriots from both communities to "seize this chance for peace [and unification] ... This plan is fair. It is designed to work ... No one can be sure what the future holds. But I am

⁵ Resumption of Intercommunal Talks, 2004, Republic of Cyprus, <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/cyphome/govhome.nsf/Main?OpenFrameSet> [accessed 10/06/04]

⁶ FM Molyviatis rings Powell on Cyprus negotiations in Burgenstock, 31st March, Greek Embassy in US, <http://www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=585&article=13230> [accessed 02/04/04]

⁷ Secretary-General's Visit to Switzerland, March 2004, <http://www.un.org/av/photo/sgtrips/sgswitz032804.htm> [accessed 02/04/04]

certain that my settlement plan offers the best and fairest chance of peace, prosperity and stability that is ever likely to be on offer ... [the plan is] inevitably a compromise [that] does not satisfy everyone's demands ... [but it] ... meets the core interests [of those on both sides] ... The choice is not between this settlement plan and some other magical or mythical solution ... The choice is between this settlement and no settlement".⁸

The result would be that both Greek and Turkish Cypriots would vote on Annan Plan V in simultaneous referendum on 24th April 2004, and if both sides accepted with a majority, the plan would take effect days before Cyprus' entry in the EU on May 1st. Unfortunately, the period between Kofi Annan's release of Annan Plan five, and the referendum was just over three weeks.

The Annan Plan, though, was extraordinary complex, it was over 9,000 pages long, with its most important sections estimated at 300 pages, and with only three weeks for analysis, the people of Cyprus would find it very difficult to digest such a complex document which would, supposedly, impact their future to such a large extent. What did the Annan Plan V offer the people of Cyprus? An overview of the main articles of the plan is necessary to explore the positives and negatives of this document. The eight main articles of the plan are as follows and represent what the agreement stood for.

- i) Affirming that Cyprus is our common home and recalling that we were co-founders of the Republic established in 1960
- ii) Resolved that the tragic events of the past shall never be repeated and renouncing forever the threat or the use of force, or any domination by or of either side
- iii) Acknowledging each other's distinct identity and integrity and that our relationship is not one of majority and minority but of political equality where neither side may claim authority or jurisdiction over the other
- iv) Deciding to renew our partnership on that basis and determined that this new bi-zonal partnership shall ensure a common future in friendship, peace, security and prosperity in an independent and unified Cyprus
- v) Underlining our commitment to international law and the principles and purposes of the United Nations

⁸ Lynch, Colum; 1st April 2004, Annan Presents Cyprus Plan, Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A40574-2004Mar31¬Found=true> [accessed 05/04/04]

- vi) Committed to respecting democratic principles, individual human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as each other's cultural, religious, political, social and linguistic identity
- vii) Determined to maintain special ties of friendship with, and to respect the balance between, Greece and Turkey, within a peaceful environment in the Eastern Mediterranean
- viii) Looking forward to joining the European Union, and to the day when Turkey does likewise.⁹

Importantly, the eight main articles which act as a summary of the basic principles of the entire Annan Plan, include what seems to be many of the basic aspirations of both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot sides. Fundamentally, for the Greek Cypriots, is the idea of a single Cyprus, which is referred to in various forms in Article I, which explicitly states the recognition of a 'common home' and a reference to the co-founding of the first Cyprus republic in 1960, which was established as a common home for both sides, the constitution of which is still in force as far as the Greek Cypriots and the international community are concerned. Article IV also is important to the Greek Cypriot position of unification, with the solidification of the ideal of an independent and unified Cyprus that ensures a 'common future' of the two sides. So, at least ostensibly, the Annan Plan states that it is about the reunification of the island, with special references to commonality, international law and democratic principles.

For the Turkish Cypriots, the most obvious relevant aspects of the main principles targeted to their agenda was the Article II which prohibits the use or threat of the use of force to resolve all issues, which would reassure the Turkish Cypriot community against the much larger Greek Cypriot community. Even more relevant to the demands of the Turkish Cypriots, is Article III, which outlines specifically the issue of 'political equality', and that although the Turkish Cypriots only constitute 18% of the islands population, they are to be considered 'distinct', and they will not be subject to dominance. In addition, for the Turkish Cypriots, the benefit of accepting the Annan Plan in the April referendum also included in Article VIII of the Main Principles, the immediate access to European Union membership. This process, which

⁹ The Annan Plan, Main Articles, April 2004, http://www.cyprus-unplan.org/Main_Articles/MainArticles.pdf [accessed 08/04/04]

the Greek Cypriot dominated Republic of Cyprus had started with its application to join the bloc in 1990, and steadily work through all political and economic criteria, ultimately successfully negotiating the *aquis communitare* and gaining the right to accede in May 2004, would be something the Greek Cypriots would have to share in a unified Cyprus with their much poorer Turkish Cypriot compatriots.

However, the adoption of the Annan Plan was by no means certain. There were many varying reactions to the final edition by all parties involved in the effort to resolve the Cyprus problem. The Turks involved in the final negotiation phase at Burgenstock, including Prime Minister Erdogan, as well as Turkish Cypriot 'Prime Minister' Talat, believed it was a 'victory' for the Turkish side and their positions. The Greek Prime Minister, Karamanlis, was non-committal, and the Greek Cypriot President Papadopoulos could barely hide his outrage at the final draft, which many Greek Cypriots considered to be pro-Turkish.

On April 7th, when campaigning for the referendum was in full swing, the President of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, made a highly emotional fifty five minute speech outlining his concerns of the Annan Plan.

I call on you to reject the [United Nations] Annan plan. I call on you to say a resounding no on 24 April. I call upon you to defend your dignity, your history and what is right. I urge you to defend the Republic of Cyprus, saying no to its abolition.¹⁰

Papadopoulos' position, as it seems, was an effort to defeat the Annan Plan because he believed that it was not a fair compromise, and that many of the basic principles of the Greek Cypriot side were not being met, while the Turkish side's basic aspirations in Cyprus were, in fact, being formalised in the document. The main concern, as indicated in the excerpt of his televised address above, is that by voting for the Annan Plan, the Greek Cypriots would lose their exclusive rights over the internationally recognised 1960 Republic of Cyprus for a new United Cyprus Republic, which the Greek Cypriots would no longer be in effective control over in the international arena, especially in the organs of the European Union. The Cypriot President also expressed concerns in relation to the viability of the plan,

[The modifications to the Annan Plan] do not meet the minimum demands we had submitted on the functionality of the plan, the readiness to implement it the day after the referenda, the substantive reunification of our country in the economic, public finance and

¹⁰ Kadritzke, Niels; May 2004, Cyprus : Saying No to the Future, Le Monde Diplomatique, <http://mondediplo.com/2004/05/07cyprus> [accessed 03/05/04]

monetary sectors ... The final Annan plan does not satisfy the Cypriots but fully satisfies Turkey's aim to control Cyprus ... In other words, the Annan plan does not dissolve the de facto division but on the contrary legalises and deepens it. So the question is not if we want a solution and reunification of our country. Because to this question our answer is 'yes'. The real question is if the Annan plan brings about the reunification or if it prolongs the division and this with our consent and signature. ¹¹

Ultimately, Papadopoulos' televised speech to his people was a slamming of the Annan Plan, as stated above, he believed it essentially encouraged partition and did nothing to promote unity and a viable federal solution. The Greek Cypriots, who were already highly sceptical of the plan, were given the ammunition they needed in order to vote no to the plan in referendum. Obviously, this speech was a huge disappointment to the architects of the Annan Plan, and especially, the UN Secretary-General himself. The Greek government, however, felt the pressure of all sides, weighed down with the expectations of the Greek Cypriots who rely on Greek support, as well as appearing not to be obstructive for a real chance at peace by the international community, Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis chose a balanced approach, but did indicate that the positives appeared to out weight the negatives in the plan,

These are critical times for Cyprus. Bearing in mind the seriousness of the circumstances, the government decided to give its position with respect and forethought to the Republic of Cyprus, its government and citizens ...the principle that Cyprus decides and Greece supports, has become more requisite ...The circumstances demand careful choices, bearing in mind the views of the immediate parties who are called to live with the positive or negative elements of their choice. ¹²

The President of the unrecognised 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', Rauf Denktash, joined his Greek Cypriot counterpart in rejecting the Annan Plan. Denktash's position was well known, even before the final negotiations took place at Burgenstock, since, Denktash refused to attend, and for the first time another Turkish Cypriot, 'Prime Minister' of 'TRNC' Mehmet Ali Talat, represented the Turkish Cypriots. Talat favoured the Annan Plan, and the international community effectively sidelined Denktash out of the process. Nevertheless, Denktash promised he would campaign against the acceptance of the Annan Plan, and campaign he did,

If the UN is wise enough, it should postpone the referendum and the negotiations should continue ... Papadopoulos says 'No'... I say 'No.' How is this going to work then? This is

¹¹ Papadopoulos, Tassos; April 7th 2004, Cyprus President says 'No' to Annan Plan in view of Referendum, Cyprus News Agency, <http://www.cna.org.cy/reviewen/> [accessed 18/06/04]

¹² Karamanlis, Kostas; April 15th 2004, Greek Premier Pledges Support as Leadership Discuss Annan Plan, Cyprus News Agency, <http://www.cna.org.cy/reviewen/> [accessed 18/06/04]

equivalent to transferring the conflict to the aftermath of May 1 under the name of 'peace.' ... If the Annan plan protected our state then we would not say 'No'.¹³

Ironically, Papadopoulos and Denktash found little to agree upon during the negotiations, but, it seemed, they found almost identical positions and arguments to put forward to their people in order not to accept the Annan Plan. The 'protection of the state' seemed to be a common theme running through both communities leaders, Papadopoulos eager to 'protect' the internationally accepted Cyprus state, and Denktash wanted to 'protect' his unrecognised and internationally shunned state. Unfortunately, with both leaders taking the argument of protecting their states, it is difficult to comprehend what they were doing in reunification talks for months on end which ultimately aimed at uniting the island under the roof of one single state with two federal components. Clearly, in the case of Denktash, reunification negotiations, and his participation in them, was a policy that Ankara was pressing Denktash to follow. When he refused to cooperate any longer, Mehmet Ali Talat, replaced him with Ankara's blessing.

With the positions of the main players in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey all different in relation to the Annan Plan, the position of all the major international actors, including the United Nations, the European Union, and the United States all emphatically supported the adoption of the Annan Plan, and issued many statements in support of accepting the plan before the referendum. The support was, indeed, such that the international community, particularly the European Union, organised a donors conference to raise funds for the transition of the new United Cyprus Republic after the potential acceptance of the plan. The United States, in support of the move by the European Union to enhance the chances of a successful referendum outcome, issued the following statement in support of the EU Donors Conference for Cyprus adjustment,

The United States welcomes the announcement today that the European Commission is ready to organize an international donors conference to provide financial support in the context of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question. We fully support such an international effort under the leadership of the European Union ... it is important for the international community to send a clear signal of solidarity with the people of Cyprus ... The United States is prepared to participate in such a conference and to contribute financially. We further stand ready to provide support and expertise to a 'needs assessment' effort in Cyprus as the first

¹³ Denktash, Rauf; April 9th 2004, Cypriots Split over UN Plan, Ekathimerini, http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_100001_09/04/2004_41606 [accessed 20/06/04]

step in preparing for a donors' conference and in support of the United Nations Secretary General's Good Offices Mission.¹⁴

The EU position, as stated by Enlargement Commissioner Gunter Verheugen, on both the Donors Conference and the final Annan Plan which was arrived at in Burgenstock was much clearer. Verheugen essentially, on the eve of the European Union's largest expansion, commented that only one issue remained unresolved, that of the Cyprus problem, and for the expansion to be a complete success, the Cyprus problem needed to be resolved before the expansion took place. He felt that the division on Cyprus had never been so close to resolution, which gave even more urgency to the need for the international community, with the EU in the lead, to reassure the people of Cyprus of the choice ahead of them.¹⁵

On the Annan Plan, Verheugen was extremely optimistic, he outlined how decades of negotiations on the Cyprus problem have led nowhere, but that the Annan Plan was, essentially, the path which would lead to the reunification of the island. Of most international observers, apart from Kofi Annan himself and his representative, Alvaro DeSoto in Cyprus, Verheugen was the most passionate about the Annan Plan, and indeed contributed to the process in Burgenstock.

I would like to stress that the Annan Plan is in line with the fundamental principles on which the European Union is founded and that the viability and the economic sustainability have been strengthened. The finalized comprehensive settlement ensures that the United Cyprus Republic is able to speak with one voice in international fora and to fully participate in the EU's decision-making process, and that the *acquis* is properly applied and enforced on the island.¹⁶

Significantly, with the support of the EU Enlargement Commissioner, especially in regards to the Annan Plan meeting the criteria in relation to the *Acquis Communautaire*, the position of Cypriot President Papadopoulos was eroded, considering one of the reasons many Greek Cypriots seemed opposed to the Annan Plan was due to the restrictions of movement and habitation. So, with the international community, particularly the United Nations and the European Union sparing no effort in formulating the compromise plan for reunification, it was now up to the two sides whether they would accept it.

¹⁴ Boucher, Richard; January 23rd 2003, U.S. Support for an EU Donors Conference for Cyprus, U.S. Government Spokesman, The U.S. State Department, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/16834.htm> [accessed 25/04/04]

¹⁵ Verheugen, Gunter; April 15th 2004, Closer than ever. High-level preparatory Donors' Conference to support the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus Problem, <http://europa-eu-un.org/article.asp?id=3394> [accessed 20/04/04]

¹⁶ Ibid

The lead up to the referendum was tense on both sides, but the results were unsurprising.

The referendum relating to the reunification process on April 24th 2004 has become a significant milestone in the development of the solution to the Cyprus problem. It was the process which, for some, brought the two communities closest they had been, officially at least, to living in a common state since the Turkish invasion in July 1974. For others, it was the day that potentially lent legal legitimacy to the division of the island and final recognition of defeat for a united Cyprus. Regardless of the emotions the referendum process will continue to foster, the results were clear. The Greek Cypriots voted 24.2% for the Annan Plan, and 75.8% against it, with a voter turnout of 88% of the eligible voters, whilst the Turkish Cypriots voted 64.9% in favour, 35.1% against with an eligible voter turnout of 87%.¹⁷

The Greek Cypriot vote and the scale of the rejection, was an enormous defeat to the international communities hopes at finally removing this long-standing intractable problem from the agenda. Cyprus would enter the European Union divided, even though the Turkish Cypriots had emphatically embraced the plan, and with it entry into the European Union as part of the 'United Cyprus Republic'. Worse, the Turkish Cypriots felt let down by their Greek Cypriot compatriots, who regardless of their vote rejecting the Annan Plan, would still be entering the European Union without them, regardless of the huge effort involved to get the Turkish Cypriots to accept the plan. Incredibly, the support of the international community dramatically shifted away from the Greek Cypriots, and was redirected toward the plight of the Turkish Cypriots and ending their isolation. The European Commission statement directly after the referendum result was a signal of things to come in relation to EU policy in Cyprus post-referendum.

The European Commission deeply regrets that the Greek Cypriot community did not approve the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, but it respects the democratic decision of the people. A unique opportunity to bring about a solution to the long-lasting Cyprus issue has been missed.

The European Commission would like to warmly congratulate Turkish Cypriots for their 'Yes' vote. This signals a clear desire of the community to resolve the island's problem. The Commission is ready to consider ways of further promoting economic development of the northern part of Cyprus.¹⁸

¹⁷ Referendum Result, April 25th 2004, BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3656753.stm> [accessed 26/04/04]

¹⁸ Commission Statement Following the Outcome of the Referendum in Cyprus, April 24th 2004, European Union @ United Nations, <http://europa-eu-un.org/article.asp?id=3431> [accessed 25/04/04]

The Commission statement clearly lays the blame for the failure with the Greek Cypriot vote, although supposedly accepting their democratic right to choose, went on the offensive. For the first time since the Turkish invasion in 1974, the Turkish Cypriots were promised that their international isolation would come to an end, although their 'state' would not be recognised. This meant, as the statement indicated, promoting further economic development that would reduce the disparity with the economy of the much wealthier Greek Cypriots. One of the initiatives of the European Union was the establishment of the 'Regulation on the Green Line', which was adopted on the 29th April 2004, only days after the referendum.¹⁹

This regulation dealing with the functioning of the Green line, which has divided Cyprus since 1974, is a serious policy by the European Union aimed at achieving a few different ends. First, the European Union has demonstrated its willingness to implement certain directives and regulations to counter the awkward situation of admitting a divided country within the bloc, with or without the enthusiastic approval of the Cypriot government. Second, the Green Line regulation has the effect of bringing the north within the fold of Europe, by encouraging the transfer of Turkish Cypriot goods and produce across the line, something that has previously been forbidden. Also, the relaxation of passport requirements for Cypriots and other EU citizens alike that would cross the green line is also a step towards the end of division. In addition, the EU considers the Green Line as an 'internal' EU border, recognising only one state in Cyprus, but, also concedes the EU *acquis communautaire* is suspended north of the line.

In addition to facilitating trade across the Green Line, the European Commission has also taken the extraordinary step, far bolder than the Green Line regulation, in order to facilitate the economic development and the lifting the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. On 7th July 2004, the EU Commission announced a comprehensive package of aid and trade measures, which included the release of the 259 million Euros, which was promised after the referendum, and the lifting of trade restrictions on the north from exporting directly from ports under its control, rather than trading through the Cyprus Republic.²⁰ Gunter Verheugun, as EU enlargement Commissioner, reassured that the measures to authorise direct trade between the EU and the 'TRNC' were to contribute, not distract, from the reunification process.

¹⁹ Council Adopts Regulation on the Green Line, May 4th 2004, European Union @ United Nations, <http://europa.eu-un.org/article.asp?id=3472> [accessed 06/05/04]

²⁰ Commission proposes comprehensive measures to end isolation of Turkish Cypriot community, 7th July 2004, <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/857&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en> [accessed 07/07/04]

As the Turkish Cypriot community expressed overwhelming support for the UN Plan to reunify Cyprus, it would have been unfair, to say the least, to leave it out in the cold. The Commission is therefore happy to propose an aid and trade scheme, which, if adopted by the Council, will foster the economic development of the northern part of the island. It will also build new bridges between the two communities and thus keep alive hopes of the reunification of Cyprus.²¹

This international policy shift, however, has benefited the Turkish Cypriots in a number of different ways. Unprecedented recognition of the political leadership of the 'TRNC' has occurred, by powerful players, including the United States and the United Kingdom. In a meeting between the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and the Prime Minister of the breakaway 'TRNC' on May 5th 2004, the comment that made the most headlines, apart from the unprecedented high-level meeting between any international state official and the Turkish Cypriot regime-taking place, was that of Powell's reference to Mr Talat as 'Prime Minister'.²² The emphasis of this meeting, which would begin a precedent, including meetings with British government officials, including level of foreign secretary, has given the Turkish Cypriot regime in the north a sense of its isolation coming to an end, both politically and economically.

Apart from the political ramifications of both the referendum results and accession to the EU of the Cyprus republic, the feelings of the people in general are often neglected, and in particular, how they perceive these dramatic events that have taken place in relation to the island, and its future. One study conducted a short time after the Annan Plan referendum in late April, revealed some very interesting data relating to how Cypriots on the Greek side felt about events that were determining their future. A large proportion, 34% of those questioned, were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the situation in Cyprus post-referendum, with 26% somewhat dissatisfied and 17% very dissatisfied, as opposed to only 11% somewhat satisfied and 9% very satisfied with the current situation.²³ These results, taken from a group of 1,000 people, roughly half from each gender, as well as proportional numbers of varying educational and regional groupings, were

²¹ Verheguen, Gunter, 7th July 2004, Commission proposes comprehensive measures to end isolation of Turkish Cypriot community, <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/857&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en> [accessed 07/07/04]

²² Turkish Cypriot Press reports that Colin Powell has addressed Mehmet Ali Talat as 'Mr Prime Minister', 6th May 2004, Cyprus PIO Turkish Cypriot Press, <http://www.hri.org/news/cyprus/tcpr/2004/04-05-06.tcpr.html#01> [accessed 08/06/04]

²³ Christophorou, Christoforos; Spring 2004, College of Tourism and Hotel Management, p.11

unexpected considering the 76% no result given to the Annan Plan not long before in Greek Cyprus.

Interestingly, with the referendum rejection behind them, the study found that 55% believed that prospects for a solution to the Cyprus problem being solved were either good or very good, as opposed to 36% believing that the prospects for solution are either bad or very bad since the referendum.²⁴ This statistic is significant, especially given the international communities constant claim that if the Annan Plan were rejected in a referendum, the United Nations would have to disengage from the Cyprus issue for a while, if not permanently. Although the majority believed a solution was possible, around 51% indicated their preferred solution was complete unification of the island, to function as a unitary state, 16% preferred the status quo as a permanent settlement, 15% indicated their preferred solution was a federation, and 13% indicated a two-state module.²⁵ This definitely explains the huge rejection of the Annan Plan, which not only was a federal solution, but a loose one at that, in many cases it would have functioned more as a confederation, seemingly according to the data and analysis above, not what the Greek Cypriot public supported.

Even though idealistically, the Greek Cypriots clearly prefer a unitary state, if the question was put to them if security guarantees would have been made for the safe and complete implementation of the Annan Plan, would it have made a difference to the overall voting in the referendum, and could it be approved in a renewed referendum? Christophorou found that a staggering 62% would be more positively inclined toward the plan under those conditions.²⁶ If these statistics are accurate, the possibility of the Annan Plan being minimally revised to enhance the security guarantees could be achieved with some further effort, although with their new found position, the Turkish Cypriot leadership is not ready to offer concessions to the plan, claiming they accepted it as is, and it cannot be changed.

This paper has outlined the significant role the international community had played over the past couple of years in order to secure the reunification of Cyprus, after thirty years of division. The United Nations, in particular, was eager to solve the problem before Cyprus was to become a member of the European Union in May 2004, the Annan Plan was a mechanism, which, the UN had supposedly found the middle road as a compromise between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities on the island. The referendum process, conducted on both sides of the island, was to ensure that the will of

²⁴ *ibid* p.23

²⁵ *ibid* p.29

²⁶ *ibid* p.29

the people, rather than potentially obstructionist politicians, had the final say on whether the plan was acceptable or not. The Turkish Cypriots, lured by the promise of EU membership and tired of international isolation, voted in favour, whilst the Greek Cypriots, not impressed with the concessions made to them, and feeling their human rights would continue to be violated under the plan, voted it down. The international communities response has been one of disappointment, and also one of rewarding the Turkish Cypriots for their courage in accepting the internationally ordained plan, whether it was workable or not, by promising financial aid, and direct trade to the self-styled regime.

While the Republic of Cyprus will take time to fully adapt to the institutions of the European Union, the Turkish Cypriots are gaining sympathy for their cause, and with the high level contacts established between the Turkish Cypriot leadership and the U.S. and U.K., the dream for full independence and international recognition is rekindling in the north, which is a concerning development for the Cyprus Republic. Although most countries, especially the EU members and the United States have vowed never to recognise the 'TRNC' officially, steps are being taken to give it a similar status to Taiwan. If this does happen, it would mean an end to the hopes of ever achieving a fair, just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem. However, the European Union has taken steps, such as the regulation of the Green Line, to ensure that Cyprus' membership into the bloc is a positive for the prospect of unity, not division. Whatever the future for the reunification of the island, it is clear all sides involved in this problem appear to be exhausted with negotiations for now, including the international community, and only time will tell if the reunification of Cyprus will ever again be a priority on the agenda of the major players in the world.

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