

Cyprus: "A Cold Peace"

Interview to the Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Cyprus and Representatives from the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot Communities

by *Davide Berruti**

Foreword

The Republic of Cyprus since the 1st of April 2004 is a full member of the European Union (EU). Unfortunately, EU membership is not inclusive of the northern part of the Island, occupied since 1974 by the Turkish Army.

The territory under Turkish control, which covers 37 per cent of the Island, is considered by international law as a part of Europe, over which the Republic of Cyprus cannot exercise its authority. The citizens living in this territory are fully considered European citizens, and they are granted all European citizenship rights. Yet, their current and self-proclaimed institutions are not recognized by the EU.

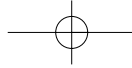
How did this situation come about?

Cyprus, as a result of its position at the edge of West and East civilisations and its resources, was successively conquered by the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines, the French, the Genoese, the Venetians, the Ottomans. Through centuries, its inhabitants were conquerors, traders, travellers from different parts of Europe and the Middle East; as a result, a mixed and multi-ethnic population settled in Cyprus. At the time in which the British regime was established on the Island (1878), the population was composed of Orthodox Greeks (around 75 per cent) and Muslims (25 per cent).

When the struggle for independence from the British Empire broke out, nationalist movements from both parties arose. While the Greek-Cypriots sought ENOSIS (Union of the island with Greece), the Turkish-Cypriots wanted TAKSIM (division of the island into two parts, with the view of a political union to Greece and Turkey respectively). Since the beginning, Britain supported both Greek and Turkish nationalists, aiming to keep them divided and to prevent British control over the island from being challenged.

As a consequence, when the Greek-Cypriots established an armed organisation called EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters), the British encouraged the Turkish-

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Cypriots to create a similar organisation, which was called TMT (Turkish Defence Organisation).

In 1955 the Greek-Cypriots began to fight against the foreign occupier; a few years later they also started to fight against the Turkish-Cypriots. Violence was also fuelled by British and USA agents.

In 1960 an agreement was signed in Geneva by the warring parties and a Constitution was given to the new independent Republic of Cyprus. In the Constitution, the island was considered bi-communal and all the public positions were supposed to be held by both communities. Britain, Greece and Turkey were established as International Guarantors of this Agreement. Three years later, the country's President Archbishop Makarios changed the Constitution; the Turkish-Cypriots considered this unilateral act as being mainly directed towards jeopardizing their own share of power.

As a protest against this constitutional change, all Turkish-Cypriots resigned from their public positions, both local and national, including the island's Vice-President. As a consequence, a new period of violence erupted.

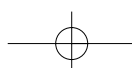
In light of the new situation, the British administration divided the Island by the Green Line, which continues to divide the island even today, while the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was established by the Security Council, in order to control and patrol the dividing line.

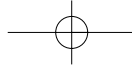
In 1974 a coup d'état, inspired by the Greek military regime, failed to overthrow President Makarios; Turkey, given its status of international guarantor which had been established by the Geneva Agreement, decided to send its troops to the island in order to protect the Turkish minority. On the 20th of July of 1974, the Turkish armed forces landed five miles from Kyrenia on the north coast; after few weeks, they established Turkish control over one third of the island, from the Morfou Bay to Famagusta Bay. As a result, the Republic of Cyprus, and even the capital Nicosia and its historical centre, was split into two separate parts. Today Nicosia remains the only town in Europe divided by a wall.

Few weeks of fighting caused hundreds of deaths, hundreds of missing persons, mass graves and displaced families. In the following years, normal life gradually resumed in the divided island; the two communities have now been living side by side for more than thirty years without, however, entertaining any significant relations.

Only in 2003 the first gate was opened by the authorities, thus allowing people to meet across the divided island.

In 2002 then Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan proposed a Peace Plan for the reunification of the island under a new "federation", which could accede to the European Union in 2004. In a Referendum called few days before adhesion to the European Union, reunification was, however, rejected by the majority of Greek-Cypriots. The majority of Turkish-Cypriots, instead, voted "Yes". This caused the failure of the Referendum; as a result, while the southern part of the island, administered by the Republic of Cyprus and by the community of Greek-Cypriots, is now in the European Union, the citizens of the northern part have the status of European citizens but do not benefit from the





"acquis communautaire", which is currently suspended. The self-proclaimed KKTC (Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti) is not recognised by any country in the world except the Republic of Turkey. An estimated presence of 856 soldiers, plus 64 policemen and civilians, has the task of patrolling the buffer zone that divides all the island.¹

I have interviewed three officials operating in Nicosia: the Major of the Town, Mrs. Eleni Mavrou; the Under-Secretary of the Presidency of the self-proclaimed TRNC, Mr. Rasit Pertev; the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Chief of UNFICYP Mission, Mr. Michael Møller.

The Mayor was elected in December 2006. She a member of the major party in the Republic, AKEL, the Communist Greek-Cypriot Party, which sustains Tassos Papadopoulos' Government and has an anti-reunification platform. Yet, Mrs. Mavrou voted "Yes" to the Annan Plan Referendum, as she admitted during her electoral campaign.

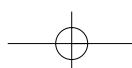
Mr. Pertev is the representative of President Talat in the talks and negotiations with the Greek Cypriot side, the UN and the EU.

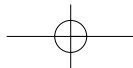
Mr. Møller is in the difficult position of representing a very long-lasting UN mission in the field. Referring to the 15 June 2007 SC resolution, he stressed that the UN mission in Cyprus must not be taken for granted; at the same time, he emphasised the importance attached in the country to the involvement of a third part in supervising the reconciliation process to the island.

***Davide Berruti:** After three years spent working on Cyprus conflict only one thing it appears clear to me: an "iced" conflict is better than a bloody one. Nevertheless it seems to be a strong and deeply rooted conflict in Europe. While Northern Ireland founds its way to resolution in the "Good Friday Agreement", while ETA started a renovate season of policies with the Government of Zapatero, while others nationalist movements find their own ways to renovate the conflict toward a peace agreement or a different settlement, in Cyprus nothing seems to change. This only at a first look, as going deeply into the problem we can observe that things are going worst after the failure of Annan Plan in April 2004. Feelings of revenge and mistrust are spreading through the society and nationalism is always ready to explode. Europe doesn't seem to offer concrete solutions, except the decision to help the Turkish part to develop, waiting – as they hope – that between two more equal societies (economically), dialogue will be easier. I agree that the economical differences has played a crucial role in refusing Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriots, but do you think that could work if the International community supports the development of the Turkish community without any possible political framework in which to operate? Doesn't look like the situation in Kosovo where "before Standards and then Status" led after seven years to a blind-road?*

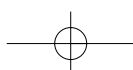
Michael Møller: ...of course economical aspects of the plan have played an important role, I assume, but it wasn't the only one, there were a number of all things that let the Greek

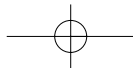
1. "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus", published on "The Blue Beret", (UNFICYP monthly journal), June 2007.





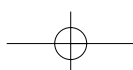
Cypriots to vote no: security issues, the way in which the issue of property had been dealt, parliament issues... I mean... The whole point of what we are trying to do here is precisely to try to build the political framework. Now, we are trying very hard to make sure that whatever we do works hand in hand with what European Union does. So that, first of all, a synchronicity is possible between what they are doing on the economical aspect and trying to assist through different means the Turkish Cypriot society to get a grade of parity with the Greek Cypriots where the idea is that a grade of parity will make it easier to integrate ones we get to a comprehensive settlement. And at the same time we are pushing the political process trying to get the two sides to sit down and resume the dialogue so we can get the good offices going. It is clear, I would say, when you look at what has happened the last three years in both societies where both the Greek Cypriot society and the Turkish Cypriot society has prospered is better off, that it doesn't help, in the sense of pushing the either side to maintain their position that they voted on, in particular the Turkish Cypriots, in other words, it's easier if you have money in your pocket to say: "well... maybe I don't need to reunify, maybe we can live the way we do now, I have a new car, I have a new house, I have food on the table, my kids go to school etcetera, so in that sense YES, greater economic and social development in the north would seem to push people who before said "yes" in the face of an absence of progress on the political front to say: "well... maybe we can just continue living as we are", there is no, right now, no positive or even negative incentives to everybody to really move. On both sides people can perfectly live the way they do, and this is one of the problems we have in getting the political process moving, and this is one argument that has not been made yet, and I'm quite convinced that it is an argument to be made, the reunification would actually improve the economy of the island as a whole, that the potential that there is out there in trade, in financial services and in all series of areas in which Cypriots are both geographically well located and also because they have well educated population and they have a good experience in many areas, both in commercial areas, and ones the island is united everybody will have more money in their pockets... that argument has not been made, the opposite argument was made in 2004, this was particularly in the south, that were going to be to cost associated the spectre of East-Germany bringing to cost a lot of money to West-Germany and all this kind of efforts, and I'm not sure that is true, in fact when I speak to businessmen, to economist, most of them they agree that there is a very good economic model to be made and a simple argument to be made to Cypriot civil society, especially the individual Cypriots, to push them hard to be more active in pushing for policy change that we can get move. I'm not sure that the comparison with Kosovo is a healthy one, certainly not in political terms... but... it's a difficult situation a little bit that you pose here because... I think it is true that the Turkish Cypriots need to be helped to bring themselves up to European standards and in that prospect making them more a parity with the Greek Cypriots because it would be so much easier to ensure that the two societies, economically and socially, are married ones we get to the point, so... "when do you start with that..." or "do you", "don't you do that because there is no political movement"... it's a little difficult, I think that





it needs to be done and it needs to be done for the sake of the Turkish Cypriot individuals themselves, their development and their ability to get a better life and... you know... whatever happens... in itself is a good thing to do. So.. I'm not quite sure that I agree with your statement here... I think... it's good thing in itself, I think it's something that needs to be done, to support and to strengthen the ability of the political process to be successful, and... it's not necessarily... but at the same time one has to be, as I said in the beginning, keep in mind that what... by doing so and in the absence of any progress on the political front at the same time, you maybe solidify the division of the island because people are saying "well... you know... you keep staying as well"... so you have a list.

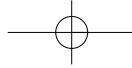
Rasit Pertev: I think politics is very important because a political problem is the source of the problem, the source of the problem is political, it is not economical. So, if you do not deal with the politics of the problem, trying to deal with it another ways, cannot be very fruitful because it is like giving medicines to soothe the pain of the patient rather than treating the illness. So, I think that in Cyprus the political issue is whether or not both sides... what are the intentions of both sides, and... either in terms of the present intentions they sit down to get there and they say "ok, let's make peace because we want to make peace", but if that is not the intention, in one side or the another does not want to make peace, does not want a marriage, and if it is the international community's point of view that they do not want a short-gun wedding, a forced wedding, then arrangements should be made in such a way that should be good neighbourly relations, but Turkish Cypriots should not be penalised as they have been since 1964, where all their rights were taken away, back at that time, they should no longer keep on being penalised, because it is not fair. Of course, if the two sides are economically at the same level this could help, it would be helpful for peace-building on the island. Let me start from the very beginning because you have to see the context of Cyprus. In 1960 the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots got together as two equal communities and they established the Republic of Cyprus. Then, in 1963 the Greek Cypriots kicked out their Turkish Cypriot partners out of the State apparatus and they forced the Turkish Cypriots into ghettos, in the enclaves, where they stayed up to 1974. During this period the Greek Cypriots who took control of the vast part of the island imposed very strict economic isolation on Turkish Cypriots, they could not bring in even cement into their enclaves, they could not bring in certain items into their enclaves and they were cut off the rest of the world. So, in the 1963 the economic states of the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots was just about the same, but from '63 onwards the economic state of the Turkish Cypriots slumped and that of the Greek Cypriots rose. Then, in 1974 what happened was that with the exchange of populations on the island after the intervention of Turkey in the island, Turkish Cypriots had the opportunity to start to have some economic development, because they were free in their own heart of the island, they could undertake economical activities, they could do a lot of things which they couldn't do before under no circumstances. Now, and from 1974 up to the 23rd of April 2003, Greek Cypriots did not see



the Turkish part of the island, but a propaganda at that time, on the Greek Cypriots side, was of course Turkish Cypriots live in horrible circumstances, with the insinuation that Turkish Cypriots were, somehow, less a human beings than a Greek Cypriots and economic in a very bad situation and of course the Greek Cypriots, being re-civilised ones, their economy were much better of. So, when the gates opened in 2003 April it was a shock to most Greek Cypriots to pass over and see that Turkish Cypriots were not living in tents in miserable conditions. And it was a shock because they expected really the Turkish Cypriots not to have the kind of economic condition they actually had. Now... so... what I'm trying to say is: there is the economic problem but there is also a very strong psychological level with a very strong element of racism in all this formulations. So, in 2004 when it came to the Annan Plan, the Greek Cypriot authorities who did not want the United Nations peace plan to be accepted by the Greek Cypriot side, they start to make their civil servants afraid, they said "if you say YES to the plan we will cut your salaries, because we will have to pay for the poor Turks, if you say YES they will get all the advantages and it will come out of your pocket, and they work for nothing, they are more competitive and what will happen to your businesses? What will happen to your hotels?" This were all things, elements, at a very psychological and at a very racist level they were used against the United Nations peace. And as a result, the United Nations Peace Plan was rejected by the Greek Cypriots.

Davide Berruti: Do you think this arguments were false? I mean they were used by the nationalist against a common feeling of the people?

Rasit Pertev: Yes, they were... I mean... a peace plan would have meant an important reform on the island, it would have meant a reform of the Institutions, it would have meant a very serious period of adjustment, everybody would have paid, everybody would have had to put in something. Don't forget that a third of the Turkish Cypriots would have again become refugees, because they would have had to get out of their houses in which they were living in the moment, and they would have been homeless, with a very big question on what to do in such a situation. So, yes, it would have been a period of adjustment, yes things would have not been all that easy, but racists put the emphasis on the inability of the Turkish Cypriots to look after themselves, the poverty and misery of the Turkish Cypriots, and it is not true, because at the moment even under the conditions of isolation, the Turkish Cypriot entrepreneurs and Institutions are at least as powerful as the Greek Cypriots, ok... they do not do as much income as the Greek Cypriots but under the same conditions they will. So, I want to say to you that the fundamentals of the Cyprus problem is not necessarily economic, yes for the purpose of a healthy settlement of the problem there's need of economic convergence, but that's not the bases. The bases of the conflict is a very strong element of racism which is felt by the Greek Cypriot side and the Greek Cypriot side predominantly feels that they're superior to the Turkish Cypriots. It's not a feeling of enmity, it's not a feeling of

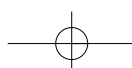


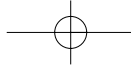
hatred, they just feel themselves to be superior to Turkish Cypriots, so they feel that it is unjust that they should be treated as equals, that they should sit as equals with Turkish Cypriots. And this is a very important psychological factor and they have to deal with it, because the history has made it such that we have the same right over this island and we are the children of the same island, and we are equal by birth.

Eleni Mavrou: First, I would like to point out that economical differences even though they played an important role, they were not the only issue that defines the outcome in the referenda on the Annan Plan. The property issues, constitutional issues, the issue of the continuation of the presence of Turkish Army, all played, amongst others, a vital role. But yes, a procedure that could help the Turkish Cypriot community to develop, thus minimizing the economical gap between the two communities can play a positive role. But only if this initiatives are taken with a political aim, that is the reunification of Cyprus. At the moment, my impression is that the initiatives taken, not only by EU but by other actors as well, are not working in the right direction. They, in a way, maintain the idea of two separate States, they affect the political settlement by interfering on terms like "State", "Authority", "Recognition", and I'm referring mostly to the initiatives that have to do with opening of ports and things like that. So, on a political level, on a social level, I'm afraid that these purely economical measures, work at the same time in the minds of the people in favour of living separately. If it's not made easy for people to realize, to understand, what would be the benefits of reunification, then perhaps on the contrary, people will become even less willing to risk prosperity for the reunification of the island.

Davide Berruti: *I see that here in Leukosia the situation is very calm, but yesterday I went to Pyla and I could feel that the situation is not so relaxed like here. What do you think if the Blue Helmets left the country, what would be the reaction of the people, would be the two communities able to keep on going partnerships and talks for peace?*

Michael Møller: You are not the first one who asks this question about peacekeeping are rush in leaving here. It's a difficult question. The question is whether we are still part of the solution or we are part of the maintenance of the status quo that would in a kind of stop the progress. I can't give you a clear answer, I think maybe a little bit of both. I certainly think that, you know, don't forget we are in a situation, in theory, of war still. There is just a cease-fire. You do have a lot of troops on this island. You have quite a few thousand, ends of thousands of Turkish troops on the other side, you have less troops but still quite a lot on both sides, they are still looking at the travel of guns, we are in the middle, now there is no, aggressive postures on either side I don't think there is any intention on any other military of either side to do anything aggressive, but the fact... our presence here prevents small incidents from escalate into big ones, and this is our rule basically to maintain the lid on the pot.





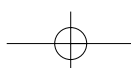
Now, you can do that in many ways, after 2004 there was some talk of diminishing the force and making into military observation measure which should be a lot smaller than the one we have now. They reduced in 2004 but, I mean, we still have a certain amount of soldiers here. This is something for the Security Council to deal with. I'm not quite sure how we would play out, what is true, including the question if we have been here for far too long, UNFICYP has been here for 43 years, it is pretty ridiculous... in a way, I certainly think that if you look at the Cyprus problem in a larger context and you look at what's happening in the rest of the world, and what kind of responsibilities international community is asking the UN to undertake in Sudan, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in anyway you get the dimension, this problem is probably the more solvable of all them all, maybe sort of complex, but it's certainly not more complex than any other, and it's certainly that some more good will and common sense could help solve it very quickly. I think that, as you would have seen in the last two reports of the Secretary General of the Security Council, the one in the summer and the one last winter, where the Secretary General, both the previous one and this new one, putting the Cypriots on notes do not take the continuous presence of UNFICYP for granted, in the absence of any political process, there is great increasing impression in the international community to question the continue presence of UNFICYP. In other words, the message is "if you want a prayer prepare to do something to move this process forward, why do you expect us to still be here forever?" So, it's a question that really is to be addressed more to the Cypriots themselves as a means of pushing them into greater reflection where they are going.

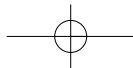
Daide Berruti: *Has this message been sent clearly to the Cyprus society?*

Michael Møller: It was sent clearly also because it was taken up and repeated in the Security Council resolution, the last one, where the Council very clearly said the same things. There is a clear sense in that communities want to say that we have important function to play, lot of people derive their sense of security from our presence here, but you know...

Daide Berruti: *don't you think could be the time to transform the peacekeeping mission in Cyprus in something different, maybe using more civil resources even in the "security sector"? I'm thinking not at the Afghanistan model with the PRT where patrol are made by civilian and military together, but at the Timor East experiences where European Union could practise a peacekeeping model based on only civilian (unarmed) resources.*

Michael Møller: it's a two-stage question: one is should we stay at all? And if the answer is "yes", "in what form?" It doesn't necessarily need to continue to be the form that we are in now. You mentioned yourself in the last question about other models that have been used in

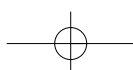


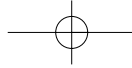


East Timor and other places, and those I think need to be looked at, but don't forget there is a difference between East Timor, here and other places, we are still formally in a state of war here, there is a cease-fire, there are lot of troops with a lot of guns on the island and probably needs to be a military element to deal with the military part of the problem of the division of the island. There is another element to disguise which has nothing to do with Cyprus, we are – "we" mean the UN - are in a moment of search, we have over hundred thousand troops, there is a lot of pressure to increase that number, we may at the end of this year be at hundred-forty hundred-fifty thousand troops, at the members States who provide this troops have difficult time in finding amount of soldiers that they need to fulfil the commitments to the United Nations, so quite naturally they look at missions like Cyprus and other long-standing missions, Western Sahara, Kashmir, Middle East and all this have been around for decades and decades, and ask themselves a questions if maybe not possible to use their soldiers in a better ways somewhere else, because they seem to have logistical difficulties to find this, fill in the process... So there is a pressure within the international community to look at this long-term missions to really produce a very clear analysis of what they have evaluated, for the time being there is a strong commitment still, to make the present troops in Cyprus to continue, but there is a lot of pressure...

***Davide Berruti:** yes... this question is similar to the one that I posed you during the conference in the International Fair, I think to a quite different mission, keeping of course a number of personnel dealing with security problems, facing the military forces in the fields, increasing the number of civilian unarmed and skilled in other way, and in May you answered me that you are already doing this by implementing and enabling UNDP and other agencies of UN, dealing with civilian aspect of the crisis.*

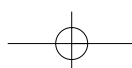
Michael Møller: But you see... one of the problems that you have here also and this was part of what we have been discussing during the Civil Society Fair, is to push the Cypriots, both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, to take greater responsibility for their own problem, at the end of the day is their problem, they have to solve it. Individuals need to get involved in much better and by doing so and by doing in a structured way you also pull away some of the reason for why the international community should continue to be here. It's not just how do you configure the UN presence, or the international presence, or EU presence, but it's also how you act as a catalyst for the people whose future you deal with and take responsibility for their own future. The problem with the European Union, when you have a divided island where half of it is in the European Union in reality, and takes a strategic advantage in dealing with issues within the European context. If you exchange the UN for the UE, than of course the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey will look at this as unfair, so you have a problem there, I mean... which is why also even the European Union is quite happy to have this division of label between the UN and themselves, where we take care of political staff and they take care of the rest, and we work all together, because of the imbalance would

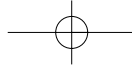




result in the negotiating positions if the whole thing was taken care by the EU. The question is an obvious one but the answer is a little bit more complex in terms of EU involvement in the political process we are trying to put... But is their problem, it's your problem, at the end of the day, and they need to be, maybe... need to think a little differently and maybe see how EU can be a little bit more involved and more insistent on getting a solution rather than just trying to help the economical and social issues.

Rasit Pertev: Let's go back, I mean... I'm giving you some historical perspective not because the past is so important but because you have to know why UNFICYP came to the island in the beginning, and UNFICYP came into the island in 1964 because there were a lot of massacres, there were a lot of violence on the island, and there were a lot of Turkish Cypriots being massacred and the world was very outraged and shocked by this. Imagine a period when, even on a daily bases, there were lots and lots of Turkish Cypriots which were disappearing off from the street, there were villages being massacred and people being killed. The international community at that time did not want Turkey, which was a guarantor power, to intervene and under the circumstances it had all the right to intervene. So, the international community needed a formula by which they could stop, they could at least have said: "yes we are doing something against massacres perpetrated against Turkish Cypriots", so is to put a lit on... stop Turkey from intervene. So in the beginning international community sort of an international force to come to Cyprus it was - if I remember correctly - it was a kind of Anglo-American force to come to the island. At that time this was very strongly rejected by the Greek Cypriots. And the Greek Cypriots tried to push it to the United Nations. And the United Nations... what they did was it was discussed in the United Nations at that time the Greek Cypriots had a quite strong support of Russia and the Soviet Union was used at that time by the Greek Cypriots and at the end what was the outcome of this discussions? The UN decided to send UNFICYP to Cyprus but they decided to send UNFICYP to Cyprus with the permission of a government of Republic of Cyprus, now at that moment there was no legitimate government because the government had been broken into two, so there was no legitimate government of Republic of Cyprus, it had shattered two pieces, so the United Nations by taking a decision of this nature, gave the excuses to Greek Cypriots to legitimise their part of the government to use it to show their part of the government has been legitimated. And it became at first the most crucial part in this conflict. So it was historically very important point, in which in fact sealed the very insolvability of the Cyprus problem, because before that decision there were two partners in conflict on the island, Greek Cypriot community and Turkish Cypriot community and after the moment United Nations was involved you had one partner was the superior partner, internationally recognised, and the other one which was the less equal partner, the Turkish Cypriots, and the "international persona" of the Republic of Cyprus was taken away from Turkish Cypriots and given to Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots remained without an international persona. So, in a way, the United Nations was, very ironically, the source of the problem. Because if this was

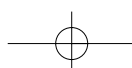


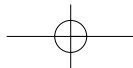


not the case, if this decision had not been taken by the United Nations then to this day we could have found some kind of solution because the international persona would still have been between us. So, what I'm trying to say to you is that: For this problem, for the United Nations is the basic test of the UN system or weather UN system can have a role in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, it is "the case" which it has not solved, it has not been able to solve for so many years. It is, and there is because the UN was part of the problem since the beginning, and UNFICYP has been part of the problem since the beginning. And when UNFICYP came to the island, did the massacres stop? They didn't. For very many years from 1963 to '74 any night UNFICYP served - I mean this I'm saying on a very personal point of view - they served as observers of the ongoing conflict, rather than those who were preventing the conflict from happen...

Davide Berruti: ...and do you think those things are changed a little bit now, the contemporary situation is different?

Rasit Pertev: in the contemporary situation it is not UNFICYP who has changed, it is the conflict itself which has changed. Now... in a way United Nations, the UNFICYP, even on the island itself, when it first came it was never efforts which treated both sides equally, you have to be very clear about this. Why didn't they treat all sides equally? Because the way UNFICYP came on to the island, they came by recognising, by legitimising one part, the Greek Cypriot part of the government, as the real government. So they recognised the Greek Cypriots government and they are here with the permission of the Greek Cypriots. So, this good will on one side and professionalism on one side is the very structure on which UNFICYP is based on the island, which is not right. It is structurally unbalanced, now... because of that a Greek Cypriot side has always tried means and ways by which they can use the United Nations in their own interests. This is the historical perspective on which have to see the other things. So we are not talking about neutral force, we are not talking about an impeccably correct force, but they came in this structurally unbalanced manner. Now, at this pointing time, the position of the conflict on the island has changed, it's not longer what it used to be. Now you have crossing points which are open. The opening of those crossing points were not also a success of UN, they happened by both sides taking action in a unilateral manner. So, nowadays there are lots of crossing, maybe not as much as we would like them to be, but everybody can cross from one side to the other, people can transport things, people can trade, people want to be better of course but there is a lot more which has changed on the island, so in this present condition we are no longer in the 1960s we are no longer in the 1970s, the UN when there are so many other conflicts on the island should not be standing a lot of time and resource on the island, they can keep an observer force on the island but they don't have to pretend as this is 1960s or '70s, 'cause this is a very comfortable place in terms of leaving standards and quality of life, much better then any part of the EU, you have to be aware of that.

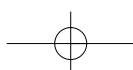


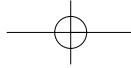


Eleni Mavrou: You said earlier that in Cyprus we don't have a bloody conflict, this perhaps leads somebody to the easy conclusion that there is no need for the peacekeeping forces in Cyprus, but I think that this is a conclusion reached superficially. There are areas or periods of time when the presence of UNFICYP is really vital for keeping peace and this calm we feel today. But apart from that, there are also issues that will be left unresolved if UNFICYP moved out from the island. For example UNFICYP is now in charge of patrolling along the buffer zone. How will contact between the two communities or crossing between the two areas be controlled if UNFICYP is not present? Who will play the role of the facilitator in solving small, sometimes local, problems that can easily lead to a violent conflict? So, even if I understand that the international community may be tired to keeping the UN presence in Cyprus when no solution is foreseen soon, I believe that it is important to have UNFICYP in Cyprus.

Davide Berruti: *Turkey has begun its talks to enter European Union, and the Cyprus Problem raised at the public opinion attention. Do you think that Turkey as EU member could help the resolution of the conflict or they just would be in a better position to support their own interests in the Island? And what is the Republic of Cyprus' opinion about the Greek position in front of the entrance of Turkey in Europe?*

Michael Møller: I'm not particularly keen to go too much into that, just remember that Cyprus as a whole is a member of the EU, and just the "aquis communautaire" and the rules of the EU have been suspended in the north, but the fact is that the Turkish Cypriots if they wants to, as many of them have done, can avail sort of facilities are provided by been EU member, when they get a passport from the Republic of Cyprus authorities, in about 15.000 have been done, that is no more, Turkish Cypriots, lot of passports, so they can use it, individuals. It's clear that the issue of the Turkish accession to EU and the Cyprus problem is intimately linked. Both in terms of the problem of military but also in terms of what is feasible within a political process right now here... so, I think your question the answer is evidently "yes", the day that Turkey becomes a EU member, in a lot of these problems fall away because Cyprus is already a EU member and Cyprus wants Turkey to become a EU member, just as Greek wants the Turkey become a EU member, because it's under strategic interest, so yes that is a very long term prospect we are talking about, people are talking about 10-15, maybe more years before that happens, if it happens. I don't see any reason why we should wait at long for resolving the Cyprus problem. In fact if you do wait at long, maybe that is a solution, I don't know this is something that Cypriots have to figure out themselves, I think they should be possible to do something... and you may want to turn the question around and ask: "would the solution to the Cyprus problem help the accession of Turkey into EU?" I think is also a "yes", because a lot of the problems that are blocking have directly something to do with Turkish position on Cyprus.





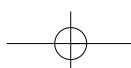
Rasit Pertev: no, thing it is not entry itself but it is the process of entry... There are two important processes, one was the accession process of Cyprus, on the Greek Cypriot part, to the European Union and the other one is that of Turkey. Now, the accession of Cyprus to the European Union was a very major opportunity. Because it was the opportunity to put pressure on the Greek Cypriots to come to the table and to make peace with the Turkish Cypriots. Now, there we missed the opportunity because what happened was that the Greek Cypriots played it very well, they said "yes" we will say "yes" to the plan, they said "yes" we will say "yes" we support the United Nations peace plan, and then the moment that they entered and they signed the accession treaty they waited to see whether the Turkish Cypriots side would say "no" to the Annan plan, and when they realised that we were not going to say "no" to the Annan Plan he had to come out into the open and say "no" to the Annan plan. So...

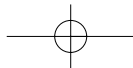
Davide Berruti: and now they can use the veto...

Rasit Pertev: now it is the opposite, now what is happening is that now Papadopoulos has the leverage... he thinks he has the leverage, on Turkey, during the EU accession process, because EU accession process is a process where you are asked a lot of questions, you put a lot of conditions, pressure is put on you and EU side has a lot of leverage, now Papadopoulos is on the EU side with a lot of power and he thinks that he can use this power against Turkey. Now, perhaps he can, but the outcome is a very negative one, because what will happen is that... what was the ideal? The ideal was, in the dream solution, was to have Greece, Turkey, Turkish part of Cyprus all within the European Union, and that would have been the solution on which you would have a very stable pool of stability in the meddle east, and it would have been very good for the peace in the region, economical development in the region, everything... and that was the aim! This is not dream of the Greek Cypriot authorities because what at the moment working to what? Is that they say "we will use our leverage against Turkey and we will make sure that we assimilate the North into the South and we make a Greek Cypriot republic, a republic purely of Greek Cypriots, and with no rights to Turkish Cypriots, and no way they will be equal, and on the other side well in the end Turkey may come in as a full member or a privilege member, so their view is a very Hellenic point of view!

Davide Berruti: what, in this situation, according to you, European Union should do in order to avoid this "bed use", let me say, being part of EU by the Greek Cypriots and in order to settle... to reach this dream...

Rasit Pertev: now, two things, one is over the last three years, we did not see pressure put by the European Union on the Greek Cypriots, because in the European Union there are a hundred subjects, on the 99 subjects have got nothing to do with Cyprus and everybody



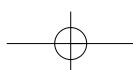


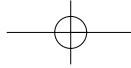
wants the support of Papadopoulos for those subjects. But on the one issue that nobody is interested in, which is the Cyprus issue, it is Papadopoulos which is pressing and nobody wants to gang up against Papadopoulos. So, we did not see and I believe that European Union at its present moment is not strong, does not have the power to stand against its own members, does not have the political will to stand against its own members. This is a very bad thing for us, which means that on one hand they consider a Turkish Cypriots to be Europeans but at the same time they can accept that these are Europeans without rights, and in a way this fits on the psychology in the South that Turkish Cypriots are somehow inferior beings because they are Europeans without rights, they are internationally unrecognised beings, so it legitimise... concretise this, the psychological vision of the Greek Cypriots...

Daide Berruti: yes, but maybe European Union tries to balance this vision by this economical support to the Turkish Cypriot community that could influence the Greek Cypriots, I mean... they are aware, they know that European Union is supporting Turkish Cypriot community...

Rasit Pertev: yes, but in a way as we discussed before... when the problem is political that means that whatever you do it will not be a satisfactory outcome, so what can European Union do, perhaps one of the better things that can be done, would be through bilateral contacts, because in European Union itself there are limitations in terms of what can be done, of course we would very much like to see the European Union to take a stronger and stronger stands against unacceptable actions in Cyprus, but at the same time they need to be stronger bilateral contacts in European countries and the Turkish Cypriots. At the same time there are a lot of things, responsibilities that follow on the Turkish Cypriots side in terms of putting their own counts in order and making sure that they do not lack behind certain reforms and good governance principles.

Eleni Mavrou: I understand with the Greek position you mean the positive stand taken concerning the accession of Turkey in Europe. The Republic of Cyprus has from the beginning taken a stand by which the accession of Turkey to Europe is considered positively. We believe that the prospect of Turkey behaving within a framework of rules and principles, the European principles and rules, can affect positively peace and stability in the whole region. But this only if Turkey is willing to behave within this framework. How can the European Union continue to discuss the accession of Turkey or even in future accept Turkey as full member, while in Cyprus Turkey violates the international law, violates international principles that are supported by European Union? So, for me the important issue is not if Turkey as a member of the European Union will help solving the Cyprus problem or will exploit the situation. For me the most important thing is how can the European Union accept Turkey as a member as long as there is no real effort by Turkey to find an agreement on the Cyprus issue.



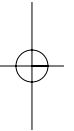
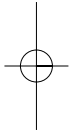


Davide Berruti: *what do you think could be your role as a Local Authorities in the complex of policies of your country on the Cyprus problem?*

Eleni Mavrou: Our long experience in Nicosia shows that local authorities can play a very constructive role in the effort to bring the two communities close to each other and to help people in both sides understand what are the benefits of cooperation. Of course, local authorities are not going to solve the Cyprus problem. The cooperation on the local level doesn't mean that problems will be resolved. There are still many issues unresolved, but I believe that in Nicosia this cooperation that lasts more than thirty years now has helped the people of the area, of the city, to understand it is in their benefits to work together and face problems together.

Davide Berruti: *Thank you, I hope that in this cooperation, in this role you want to play, we as Italian local authorities can help.*

Eleni Mavrou: I look forward, I believe that yes they can!



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