

## *Towards a 'European Solution' of the Cyprus Problem? Assessing the views of some (Greek-)Cypriot MEPs*

Stelios Stavridis <sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This paper falls within the current wider debate about the possibility of a 'European solution' for the long-standing Cyprus Problem. Now that the Republic of Cyprus is a member of the European Union, such a possibility is attracting much attention. The paper begins with a general discussion of recent developments, from the immediate post-Annan referendum reactions to the more recent decision in early 2006 to begin again soon negotiations. It then turns its attention to the past two years or so, from the time that the first ever Cypriot MEPs got elected (by default Greek-Cypriot MEPs due to the continuing military occupation of northern Cyprus). It attempts to assess if and how they have influenced the general EU/EP approaches towards the Cyprus Problem, but also towards Turkey. The paper concludes that although the initially negative and hostile reactions to the 2004 Greek-Cypriot Annan Plan referendum result have subsided, this may not necessarily be due to the Cypriot MEPs work, and may be more closely related to a growing anti-Turkey's EU accession feeling across the EU as a whole, and especially in the EP.

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## INTRODUCTION

2006 is an important year for Cyprus. It has been two years since the Greek-Cypriots overwhelmingly rejected the Annan Plan, unlike their Turkish-Cypriots counterparts (24 April 2004). The Plan is null and void as a consequence of those results. It has also been two years since the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU (1 May 2004). As a result of the ongoing Turkish occupation of 37% of its territory, the *acquis communautaire* only applies to the non-occupied part of the Island. This year (on 21 May 2006), the first parliamentary elections since the Annan Plan saga took place (for a brief pre-election analysis see Stavridis 2006). This year is also important because, following the formal beginning of accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005, the Union has 'asked' Turkey to recognize the Republic of Cyprus both formally (*de jure*) and *de facto* (by opening up its ports and airports to Cypriot flagged ships and carriers) by the end of the year (2006). Elections are due in Turkey by the end of 2007 and there is growing speculation that PM Erdogan will call them earlier, including possibly during 2006.

This paper falls within the current wider debate about the possibility of a 'European solution' for the long-standing Cyprus Problem. Now that the Republic of Cyprus is a member of the European Union, such a possibility is attracting much attention<sup>2</sup>. The paper presents some general considerations (Part I). The Second Part begins with an analysis of recent developments, including the recent decision in early 2006 to try and start again soon reunification negotiations (2.1). It continues with a general discussion of reactions to the NO vote from its immediate aftermath to the current electoral period (2.2). The paper then turns its attention to the past two years, from the time that the first ever Cypriot MEPs got elected (by default Greek-Cypriot MEPs due to the continuing military occupation of northern Cyprus) until the time of writing (mid-May 2006). It attempts to assess if and how the MEPs have influenced the general EU/EP approaches towards the Cyprus Problem, but also towards Turkey (Part III). The paper concludes that although the initially negative and hostile reactions to the 2004 Greek-Cypriot Annan Plan referendum result have somehow subsided, this may simply be due to a growing anti-Turkey's EU accession feeling across the

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<sup>2</sup> It goes without saying that other actors remain as important, for instance, the UN, or the USA (see Güney 2004).

EU as a whole, and especially in the EP (Conclusions). Thus, as I have argued elsewhere, we are possibly moving from a ‘Cyprus Problem’ to a ‘Turkish Problem’, but without having resolved the ‘Cyprus Problem’ (Stavridis 2005). Is a ‘European solution’ a possible solution? Perhaps. It will depend primarily on the EU’s decision to take initiatives in this particular area now that it has strong legal means at its disposal. But this is not the main purpose of this paper. Its main objective is to present recent developments and to address the question of whether Cypriots MEPs have made a difference since they joined the European Parliament in the June 2004 Euro-elections.

### **PART ONE: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

At the systemic level, the impact of the Cold War meant that for a very long time there was a ‘freeze’ in Europe. Therefore, Cyprus fell (thankfully) within the Western Liberal world. But although the key countries involved in the Cyprus Issue from the start (Britain, Greece, Turkey; and later the USA) were all NATO members at the time of Cyprus’ Independence, the European ‘freeze’ meant that every effort was made to avoid any gain from the ‘enemy’ (the Soviet bloc) at that time and during the whole duration of the Cold War era. This should not be seen as a justification of what happened but rather as an explanation. Unfortunately<sup>3</sup>, as in many other parts of the world, the Cold War logic was too powerful to deal with specific problems. But, as a result of the end of the Cold War, alternative scenarios have appeared, including for Cyprus. Thus, the 2004 mega-enlargement has created a new situation, namely the possibility of a European solution to the Cyprus Problem. All this is mentioned in order to stress how important the international context is for Cyprus<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> In that respect, it is worth mentioning that only when democratic states will have a truly democratic foreign policy (both in its decision-making process and more importantly in its context), these ‘contradictions’ might become things of the past.

<sup>4</sup> The other international dimension for Cyprus has to do with the historical decolonization process: i.e. self determination *à la* Wilson WW1 but also in the post WW2 era, something which is particularly relevant here because of the British retreat ‘East of Suez’, but apparently only East of Suez. The ‘War of Independence’ was only partly ‘won’ in 1960 because its overwhelming Greek majority did not want independence but Union with Greece (*enosis*). This is no longer a realistic option for either Greek-Cypriots or Greeks. As for the Turkish, and later also Turkish-Cypriot, preferred option of *taksim* (double division and double union, the south with Greece and the north with Turkey), the current situation looks very close to it (I do not enter here in the illegality of the occupation and the settlement of thousands of settlers in contravention of International Law). Finally, the continued existence of British ‘sovereign bases’ (i.e. not part of the Republic of Cyprus’ territory both formally and legally speaking) confirms that the inhabitants of the Island did not necessarily get what they wanted in 1960. On that particular subject it is strange to note that even now the bases topic remains controversial. There is little serious discussion, most of it is

At the conceptual level, the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of an independent state has a vital principle of the international system for a long time (the so-called Westphalian system). Legally speaking it still remains valid even if there is now a process of globalization that goes across borders. But we also know that in the real world some states are 'more equal than others'. Cyprus represents a case of extreme interference in the internal affairs of an independent state from the word 'go', that is to say from the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960<sup>5</sup>. By intervention of course I do not restrict myself to military intervention but also to political pressure, economic and other means (for details see Couloumbis 1996).

At long last, International Relations have changed and are changing: questions of human rights and democracy are now crowding the new international agenda. These ideas and concepts are of course not totally new (be it from the German philosopher Immanuel Kant in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the US President Woodrow Wilson in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, or more recently President Jimmy Carter in the 1970s<sup>6</sup>), but they have really gained prominence in the post-Cold War era. This new dimension has rarely been applied to the Cyprus Problem. But now that the Republic of Cyprus is a member of the European Union, all legal and political instruments for the human rights protection have gained strength. Even though Cyprus has

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simplicistic and unhelpful (anti-imperialism discourses). This lack of debate and the current concentration on the demilitarization of the island represents in my view a clear contradiction for at least two reasons: first, there is a military occupation of 37% of the north of the Island and it seems that the current military levels are higher than they were 4 or 5 years ago, and, second, as the Republic of Cyprus belongs to the CFSP and its European Defence dimension, at a time of EU militarization it seems quite inappropriate to talk about Cyprus demilitarization. For instance, Cyprus's National Guard Head Constantinos Bishbikas attended the regular meeting of the EU's Military Committee in mid-May in Brussels (as reported in *The Cyprus Weekly*, 19-25.05.06). the Cypriot Parliament also attends -as an observer- several activities of the WEU Assembly and the NATO PA ([in Greek], *Report of Activities*, Cypriot Parliament, Nicosia, September 2005, pp 30-32). See also the Report's reference to the activities of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Legal Affairs Committees, p. 66. On the growing Turkish military presence in recent years, see [in Greek] Aristos Aristotelos, *Annual Report on military forces in Cyprus in 2006*, Strategic Studies Unit, Research Center, Intercollege, Nicosia, 2006. For full details of the Greek, Turkish and Cypriot military forces, see The International Institute for Strategic Studies' *The Military Balance 2005-2006*, Routledge, London, October 2005, pp 71-73, 98-101, 116-118.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the above, the 1960 Treaties and Accords represent clearly imposed arrangements both internally (political equality between a majority and a minority) and externally (guarantor powers with right of intervention collectively or individually).

<sup>6</sup> In Europe this dimension gained importance with the 'Helsinki Process'.

obtained plenty of legal support within the wider context of the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the power of European legislation within the Union is far more effective than the ones offered by Strasbourg. The reason is simple: EU decisions are legally applicable. Council of Europe ones, including those of the ECHR, depend heavily on the good will of the party condemned, as the *Loizidou Case* has clearly shown. Although that particular initial Court decision was taken in 1994 and Turkey repeatedly refused to comply with it, it was only when the question of Turkey's EU accession negotiations became a real possibility that the Turks decided to comply with it.

In addition, at the EU level, what remains beyond doubt is that nowadays and for some time now the EU is an international actor of sorts although there is no agreement about what kind of actor it is (a power bloc, mainly economic; a civilian power; a military power, at least in the making; a super power; a civilizing or normative power)<sup>7</sup>. Three points remain clear, *at least* at the rhetorical level:

- the EU is a force for democracy (democratisation; promotion and defence of democracy);
- the enlargement process of the Union over the years (c.f. Southern enlargement in 1981 and 1986) but especially the 2004 enlargement and forthcoming ones are means that ensure democracy and stability in the immediate EU neighbourhood. Once enlargement occurs, the set up is different and new neighbourhoods appear (see the *European Neighbourhood Policy* that has just been launched recently);
- in that respect, the European Parliament plays an important role as the 'moral tribunal' for foreign policy issues. It encompasses a wide range of mechanisms on a variety of international topics (it adopts resolutions and reports, holds debates, organizes question time, and public hearings; there is also an annual report on human rights violations in the world)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> For a review of the current debate, see inter alia Fernández and Stavridis (2006).

<sup>8</sup> Just to quote one recent example, the EP has asked Morocco's government to free Sahawari political prisoners ('El Parlamento Europeo pide al gobierno marroquí que libere a los presos políticos saharauis', *El País*, 28.10.05). In May 2005, the EP organized a public hearing on its 'promoting democracy' in the world ('Le Parlement européen en promoteur de la démocratie dans le monde', *Le Monde*, 26.05.05, [www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr), accessed on that day).

But, and here is the catch, there is a difference between the rhetoric and the reality. I have discussed this point elsewhere and will not repeat it here, but it must be borne in mind all the time (Stavridis 1999; 2001; 2005). Suffice to say, the record to date is rather poor. The EU's impact on the Cyprus Problem has been rather limited. The EU has not helped to try and find a solution to the Problem. For years it has hidden behind its rhetorical support for any UN solution (including the Annan Plan in 2004). In practice, and despite Greece membership since 1981, over Cyprus the EU has favoured the position of Turkey, a position that has been very close to that of both Britain and the USA<sup>9</sup>. In my view, the only positive development has been the EU's decision not to falter on its commitment that Cyprus would be joining (provided it fulfilled all the necessary criteria) *irrespective* of its political situation. The fundamental argument in that rationale being that the current situation is not of Cyprus' own making but the result of Turkish invasion and occupation, both illegal acts under international law and UN principles (a point conveniently ignored by plenty of analysts and observers, not necessarily from Turkey, the UK or the USA<sup>10</sup>). This particular EU firm position was not easy to sustain, with plenty of countries, governments, parliaments, politicians, individuals (including many so-called 'independent' academic think tanks) trying to rock the boat. Of course, an important qualification might be that all the EU has achieved by this stance is to bring about what is known on the Island as the 'Euro-partition': EU membership *together with* permanent division. The latter would be an unwelcome development in itself that was predicted as a possibility a long time ago (Gordon 1998). The fact that it resembles *taksim* very much is something that only biased observers and analysts 'conveniently' fail to note.

Now, the situation is different because Cyprus is a full member of the EU (the whole island is a member, and the *acquis* is temporarily suspended in the North, i.e. the occupied territories). It is not exactly the same as Eastern Germany before German reunification but it

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<sup>9</sup> For a different view see Müftüler-Bac and Güney (2006).

<sup>10</sup> See Diez (2000) and Tocci (2005). This 'missed' point also explains why Cyprus was not asked to deal with its good neighbourly relations in the same way as Turkey has, simply because there is an aggressor and an aggrieved here. Again, a point conveniently lost in claims such as: 'Esto [this supposed inconsistency in EU policy-my addition] no deja de ser incómodo para Turquía, que ve cómo se le exigen garantías de seguridad y estabilidad en sus relaciones con otros países *que a Chipre no se le han exigido para su propio territorio*' (Lorca and Escribano 2006: 24; emphasis added).

is similar to it (East German trade with West Germany enjoyed a special status and in 1990 the EU absorbed East Germany without a formal enlargement process or changes in the existing EU treaties).

Hence, the current debate about a 'European solution'. In the case of Cyprus, there are plenty of examples for such a discussion. It is not the intention of this paper to assess them. Just to mention that an International Group of Legal Experts has presented a very coherent case in this direction (International Expert Panel Report 2005<sup>11</sup>), but that there are plenty of other examples to date<sup>12</sup>. It is also an argument that is increasingly used by a number of politicians on the Island. For instance<sup>13</sup>, on a TV programme on the last day of the electoral campaign (19 May 2006), *Eurodi* President Prodromos Prodromou argued that EU human rights protection provisions go much further than anything that was provided for in the 1960 Zurich agreement. He reminded the viewers that for the first time the Cypriot Parliament had allowed (following a constitutional amendment) Turkish-Cypriots who reside in the non-occupied part of the Island to vote for Greek-Cypriot electoral lists<sup>14</sup>. Similarly, for the first time there is a Turkish-Cypriot standing on a Greek Cypriot list (the woman poet Nese Yiasin on the *EDI* list).

## **PART TWO: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

### **2.1 recent developments in the Cyprus Issue**

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<sup>11</sup> Professor Auer Andreas, Switzerland, Professor of Constitutional Law, University of Geneva; Professor Bossuyt Mark, Belgium, Professor of International Law, University of Antwerp, Professor Burns Peter, Canada, Former Dean of the UBC Law Faculty, Professor of Law, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Professor Dr. Alfred De Zayas, USA, Geneva School of Diplomacy, Former Secretary, UN Human Rights Committee, Professor Helmons Silvio-Marcus, Belgium, Emeritus Professor of Université Catholique de Louvain, Public International Law and Human Rights, Professor George Kasimatis, Greece, Emeritus Professor of University of Athens, Constitutional Law, Honorary President of the International Association of Constitutional Law, Professor Dr. Dr.h.c. Oberndorfer Dieter, Germany, Professor Emeritus, Political Science, University of Freiburg, Professor Malcolm N Shaw QC, UK, The Sir Robert Jennings Professor of International Law, University of Leicester. More details at: [www.ifestos.edu.gr](http://www.ifestos.edu.gr).

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Andreas Theophanous, 'Two years after: 10 fundamental guidelines for a Cyprus solution', *The Cyprus Weekly*, 12-18 May 2006; see also his [in Greek], *The Next Step: what should we do after the Annan Plan?*, Intercollege, Nicosia, July 2004; see also [in Greek], Andreas Siamarou, 'A solution through the harmonization of the European *acquis*', email distributed in the spring of 2006 by its author, a professor at *Intercollege*, and a *Euroko* (European Party) parliamentary candidate in the May 2006 parliamentary elections.

<sup>13</sup> For details on political parties in Cyprus see below.

<sup>14</sup> *PIK 1* TV programme 'Vouleftikes 2006', 19.05.06.

It must be stressed that the Conflict might have entered a new phase. In the past few weeks, there appears to be some new fluidity. The overall picture continues to evolve rapidly, although there is no major breakthrough yet. There follows the four main reasons why this might be the case:

First, the continued non-recognition of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey affects not only the extension of the Customs Union agreement to the new EU states. In practice, its refusal to extend its Customs Union obligation to the Republic of Cyprus means that Cypriot-flagged ships and aircrafts cannot use Turkish ports and airports<sup>15</sup>. It represents a fundamental challenge to the international credibility of the European Union. How can third parties take the CFSP seriously if the EU cannot even force an applicant state to accept its formal commitments? How credible is the Union if it does not object to the fact that an associated and applicant state that does not recognize one of its own members?

Secondly, in early 2006 the Turkish government produced a new 'Peace Initiative' on Cyprus (the 'Gül proposals'). There have been some positive responses by European states and bodies. For instance, seventy-five MPs from the PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) signed a written declaration in late January 2006 giving their support to the Gül initiative<sup>16</sup>. However, the Greek-Cypriots have rejected it out of hand<sup>17</sup>, on the grounds that it is an attempt to link formal EU commitments for Turkey (extension of its Customs Union to all new EU members, including Cyprus) with the restrictions that apply to Turkish-Cypriot trade following the Turkish invasion and occupation as recognized by many UN resolutions and ECHR decisions in the past. Whether this particular initiative gains momentum or not falls beyond the scope of this paper, what matters is that there is a

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<sup>15</sup> A real case occurred recently when Turkey refused a Cypriot-flagged vessel (the 'Able-F') access to one of its ports (Mersin), *Cyprus News Agency*, 23.02.06. It is also reported that the President of the European Community Shipowners' Association has sent a letter to the EU Transport Commissioner, Jacques Barrot, to complain about this situation, *The Cyprus Weekly*, 28 April-4 May 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Doc. 10820: [www.assembly.coe.int](http://www.assembly.coe.int), 20.03.06. Here it is important to contrast that development with an early day motion dated 9 March 2006 in the UK House of Commons submitted by four Labour MPs expressing their concern over the Turkish action plan, *The Cyprus Weekly*, 17-23 March 2006: Labour Party MPs Edward O'Hara, Alan Meale, Rudi Vis, and David Lepper.

<sup>17</sup> for details, see *Cyprus News Agency*, 25.01.06; *The Aide Memoire* entitled 'A Position of the Cyprus Government on Turkish Proposals of 24 January 2006'.

new momentum as the numerous meetings between the prime ministers of Greece and Turkey show (the most recent one during the 11-13 May 2006 EU-Latin America and Caribbean meeting in Vienna).

Thirdly, the EU's COREPER, and subsequently superior Council organs, have decided to decouple any provisions for aid to the Turkish-Cypriots from those on direct trade with the Turkish occupied north. In addition, Cyprus' accession Treaty Protocol 10 provisions, which require unanimity (thus confirming the possibility of a Cypriot veto), have been accepted as the basis for decisions on those issues, instead of what other EU countries were trying to use, namely QMV (qualified majority voting).<sup>18</sup>

Fourthly, in late February 2006, the Cypriot President met the UN Secretary General to discuss possible ways forward, and it appears that some progress has been made. Technical groups will be exploring practical issues, including of political content. The Missing Persons Committee has now been decided, although it is not expected to begin its work before the end of this summer (2006). Positive reactions can be found in many a quarter, both within and outside Cyprus. There are of course disagreements too: from Turkey, the Turkish-Cypriots, and a number of Greek-Cypriots. But it represents a far cry from the nightmare scenarios presented by many, including by Koffi Annan himself, about the consequences of a non-approval of his Plan back in 2004<sup>19</sup>.

## *2.2 the debate over the implications of the rejection of the Annan Plan*

Since the 2004 referenda results, both in Cyprus and elsewhere, there have been basically two camps: those who blame the Greek Cypriots who voted against the Plan; and, those who argue that the Plan was rightly rejected as it was neither workable nor just. The former argue that therefore the only way to move ahead is to break the stalemate created by the NO camp in the South. The latter call for renewed, detailed, well-prepared preliminary talks for a new round of negotiations, which would lead this time to a just and workable solution to the

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<sup>18</sup> see *Cyprus News Agency*, 24.02.06 and 27.02.06.

<sup>19</sup> The Cypriot Parliament has made a special effort to explain this situation. See its [in Greek] *Report of Activities*, Nicosia, September 2005, p.11.

Problem. Both camps include politicians, lobbies, observers, the media, academics, and civil society actors. Without claiming to be exhaustive<sup>20</sup>, there follows a review, first of those who claim it was wrong to reject such a ‘good deal’, given the circumstances, followed, second by those who justify the rejection of such a ‘bad deal’, given the circumstances, and finally, third, by some mixed ones.

For the view that blames the Greek Cypriots, and in particular President Papadopoulos, see Oliver Richmond (2005) and the International Crisis Group Report (ICG 2006). Richmond criticizes the Cypriot President for taking an ‘ethno-nationalist’ position (Richmond 2005: 160). The ICG Report complains about what it claims was the President ‘playing upon the public’s fears and anti-colonial sentiments’ (ICG 2006: 6). In the wake of the May 2006 parliamentary elections results, *Euronews TV* ran its morning news (22.05.06) repeating its allegations that the parties that had supported the ‘Reunification Plan’ in 2004 had lost ground in favour of those that had opposed the ‘Reunification Plan’. There was no mention of the fact that it was only ‘one’ possible plan, not ‘the’ only possible one, thus contributing to efforts at presenting the Greek-Cypriots as the main culprits.

The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, did not hide his profound disappointment. He considered the Greek Cypriot President to be primarily responsible for the result<sup>21</sup>. The (then) EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Germany’s Günter Verheugen, attacked personally President Tasos Papadopoulos<sup>22</sup> by claiming that the Greek-Cypriots had ‘cheated’ their way into the EU<sup>23</sup>. In France, journalist Niels Kadritzke described the Cypriot President as ‘an old school Greek nationalist’, and the referendum result as ‘saying “no” to the future’<sup>24</sup>. In Britain, Oxford-based historian Timothy Garton Ash called for President

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<sup>20</sup> Part of what follows draws from Stavridis (2005: 25-26).

<sup>21</sup> *in-news*, 31.05.04: [www.in.gr](http://www.in.gr). For details, see *Report of the UN Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus* (02.06.04) and Cyprus Republic President reply (*Letter by the President of the Republic, Mr Tassos Papadopoulos, to the UN Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, dated 7 June, which circulated as an official document of the UN Security Council*, 09.06.04), Press and Information Office, Republic of Cyprus: [www.moi.gov.cy](http://www.moi.gov.cy) (accessed 19.10.04).

<sup>22</sup> See *in-news*, 21.04.04, [www.in.gr](http://www.in.gr).

<sup>23</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 26.04.04: [www.iht.com](http://www.iht.com) (accessed on that day). See also MEPs interviews below.

<sup>24</sup> in the May 2004 issue: [www.mondediplo.com](http://www.mondediplo.com) (accessed 15.10.04).

Papadopoulos to be received 'coolly as he deserves' by his June 2004 Dublin European Council counterparts<sup>25</sup>. (Then) Nicosia-based UK political analyst James Kerr-Lindsay embellished by claiming that 'Cyprus could end up being the most disliked new member'<sup>26</sup>. *The Economist* argued<sup>27</sup> that the referendum result was creating 'confusion on the island and headaches for Europe'. Its article was revealingly entitled 'Cyprus: An ominous European debut'. *The Economist* also quoted UN negotiator Alvaro de Soto as saying when asked how he felt about the referendum result 'I would have to bite my tongue'. The article also included a picture of President Papadopoulos in a way that could be regarded to show him making an insult usually associated with the use of an index finger. It also added a caption saying a 'new Mr NO' in reference to former Turkish-Cypriot Rauf Denktash's obstructive record in the past. In Spain, similar negative reactions were rife. Professor Francisco Veiga lamented what he called 'the arrogance of the Greek-Cypriots'<sup>28</sup>. In Greece, academic Alexis Heraclides made a very strong personal attack on President Papadopoulos, and to a large extent on most Greek-Cypriots, if one considers that nearly 80% of them turned down the Annan Plan (Heraclides 2004: 38-42; 44-50)<sup>29</sup>. Similar Turkish-Cypriot and Turkish reactions are best summed up by Mehmet Ali Birand when he argues that there is 'disappointment, furthermore betrayal' (Birand 2004: 105). In a symbolically entitled piece 'Papadopoulos has saved us from our complex', he acknowledges that there is no chance that the Annan Plan no. 5 be modified in the future beyond 'cosmetics' (2004: 108). In short, he claims that because the North voted YES and the South voted NO, it is strange that only the Greek-Cypriots joined the EU, and that the Turkish-Cypriots did not. Besides being the official line taken by Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot community, such an approach simply does not recognize that the Republic of Cyprus as a whole has joined the Union, with the *acquis communautaire* being suspended *because of Turkey's occupation*. Nor does it take into consideration that the referenda were about a specific reunification plan and not about EU entry.

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<sup>25</sup> *El País*, 01.05.04. See also Soler (2004); Closa (2004).

<sup>26</sup> *The Star*, 26.04.04: [www.star.co.za](http://www.star.co.za) (accessed 15.10.04). Kerr-Lindsay has continued his harsh criticism of President Papadopoulos with an academic article published in early 2006, although written in early 2005 (Kerr-Lindsay 2006).

<sup>27</sup> *The Economist*, 29.04.04, [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com): accessed 17.03.06.

<sup>28</sup> *El País*, 5.10.04.

<sup>29</sup> For a slightly milder critique see Veremis and Savvides (2004).

On the contrary, there are better reasons in my view to explain the NO vote: they blame the Plan itself for the result. Claire Palley (2005) gives many details why it was an international debacle for the UN in general and for its Secretary General and his negotiating team in particular. Both Andreas Theophanous (2004b<sup>30</sup>) and Van Coufoudakis (2004: 74-75)<sup>31</sup> dissect the many problematic dimensions of the Plan (from security concerns, economic problems, to political constitutional complications). The International Expert Panel Report (2005) presents an alternative solution scenario to the Island's division based on International and European Law. Its main objective is to show that the Plan did not respect fundamental international law, European law, and Human Rights law. Its objective is to set the wider parameters for further political negotiations in the future but it does not present an alternative to the Annan Plan. The Report also suggests the setting up of a Constitutional Convention on the issue, whose work would be followed by two simultaneous referenda, but without the participation of Turkish settlers this time round.<sup>32</sup>

The above studies emphasize the many deficiencies the Annan Plan contained. They also rightly point out –as opinion surveys confirm– that the Greek-Cypriot side views on the whole a federal, bi-zonal, bi-communal solution as the only acceptable *alternative* to their preferred unitary-state solution (for further details see Lordos 2004: 11-13). Alexandros Lordos' survey also confirms that nearly 70% of Greek-Cypriots accept federation as a 'moderate, quite, or ideal' solution (Lordos 2004: 13), thus contradicting the view that they do not wish such a solution at all as so many detractors of the referendum result claim (see above). On the contrary, the Turkish-Cypriot side continues to believe in a confederal solution and the Annan Plan offered most of what they wanted, hence their 2/3 vote in its favour. There was also a mistaken confusion between the approval of the Annan Plan and the approval EU entry (for example see Bahcheli 2004). Lordos notes that among young(er) Greek-Cypriots there is now a tendency to consider a two-state solution as a possibility, but

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<sup>30</sup> On the negative economic and financial implications of the Plan, see also Theophanous (2004a: 81-90).

<sup>31</sup> As Coufoudakis puts it so succinctly: "'Annan 5" was a Christmas tree loaded with gifts for everyone but the Greek Cypriots' (2004: 75). For a similar opinion, see Melakopides (2006: 84-90).

<sup>32</sup> All these points were reiterated by Prof Kasimatis, a member of the Expert Panel, but also by Prof Constantine Chrysogonos, at a conference (Nicosia, 26 March 2006; see Annex 3 for conference details).

it remains a tendency and a minority view all the same (Lordos 2004: 15). It is also correct to point out that the Plan's timetable also greatly favoured the Turkish-Cypriots (see Coufoudakis 2004<sup>33</sup>; Bahcheli 2004). Instead of acting as a catalyst for reunification, it acted as additional pressure on the Greek-Cypriots. The Turkish-Cypriots were in a win-win situation because: had the Plan succeeded they would have joined the EU. Without its approval, they still join the EU as Cypriot citizens. The timing of the referendum was therefore clearly acting in a discriminatory fashion. A discrimination that was further stressed by the implications of an approval of the Plan: by occurring before EU accession all its (many) derogations would not have been challenged in EU courts. This was particularly important for Greek-Cypriots because it would have meant a legitimization and legalization of the Turkish invasion and occupation, a near-permanent exclusion of prominent features of the *acquis communautaire* on basic freedoms, no more compensation through legal settlements, and a continued presence of most Turkish settlers. Thus, the changing context, i.e. EU accession (and its famous 'catalytic effect') might have possibly worked as a real catalyst *after* accession, not before. That is to say when basic European principles and EC law would have strengthened the UN resolutions and the ECHR decisions on Cyprus. This is known as the 'European solution' to the Problem.<sup>34</sup>

For an in-between approach between the two 'extreme'<sup>35</sup> positions of 'the Greek-Cypriots are to blame' versus 'the Plan is flawed', see Hubert Faustmann (2004). Although his study clearly shows that security concerns were at the basis of the NO vote in the south, Faustmann does not follow totally through his own logic in his concluding remarks, thus showing his own bias in favour of the Annan Plan. Peter Loizos offers a milder critique of the result in the South by stressing the importance of perceptions. He also rightly stresses that perceptions should be taken seriously, and also that one should not dismiss the vote by

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<sup>33</sup> In particular see his: 'The Turkish Cypriot vote is easier to explain. "Annan 5" maintained the Turkish Cypriot "state" while removing the isolation it faced since 1983. The Turkish Cypriot "component state" would remain under Turkey's protection while acquiring significant veto powers in Annan's new republic. With Turkey's policy shift, Denktash' near dictatorial powers were marginalized. Finally, the promise of significant economic assistance from external as well as domestic sources and the benefits of EU accession may have been the biggest selling point of "Annan 5" for the Turkish Cypriots' (Coufoudakis 2004: 73).

<sup>34</sup> For more details, see the International Expert Panel Report (2005).

<sup>35</sup> By 'extreme', I do not mean that they are both equally acceptable, not only from a moral viewpoint but also from an 'objective' academic one.

Greek-Cypriots as sheer nationalist rejection-ism simply because so many Greek-Cypriots voted against the Plan. In other words, it is a political reality that cannot be rejected out of hand and ignored (Loizos 2005). Similarly, Keith Kyle offers a critique of the way the Plan was set up to bypass Denktash's traditional obstructionism without thinking about the wider implications of such a decision, and by taking for granted the Greek-Cypriot electorate (Kyle 2004: 111). There is however some blame put on President Papadopoulos. Kyle also argues that 'a bizonal, bicomunal federation does not sit well with the principles of European law' (2004: 112). This point is important because it would mean that the whole compromise agreed in principle by the two communities on the island is fundamentally flawed, but also because the EU has consistently reiterated that it would accommodate any solution between the two parties<sup>36</sup>.

The President expressed powerfully his opposition to the Plan in his 7 April 2004 speech to the Nation. Many supporters of the YES vote consider him to be the main reason why Greek Cypriot public opinion shifted over that issue (see above). To a large extent, this reflects a serious lack of knowledge of how politicized public opinion in Cyprus is in the first place<sup>37</sup>. This is not only due to a common propensity in the Mediterranean to talk politics on a daily basis. It has mainly to do with the fact that all Greek Cypriots have been directly affected by the 1974 events. This is equally true of the events prior to 1974 but the impact of the Turkish invasion and occupation remains indelible from the minds of all Greek Cypriots (as I assume this is also the case for Turkish Cypriots too). It is revealing to note that Lordos' survey findings confirm that nearly 95% of those polled considered they were aware of the Plan, admittedly at various levels of awareness, but only 5.8% declared no awareness

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<sup>36</sup> By applying the *acquis communautaire* in a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, any basic contradictions will have to be removed eventually. In that respect, an approach based on the International Expert Panel Report, which favours an initial agreement over basic principles respecting International and European Law appears much more promising than the 9000-page long Annan Five Plan.

<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the author of the IGC Report on Cyprus (IGC 2006) admitted that having not been based on the Island himself, or because of the fact that the IGC does not possess a Nicosia antennae, might explain the reason why some parts in the Report are not be as fine tuned as he had wished (Nicosia, 15 March 2006: Report Launch meeting organized by the PRIO in the Lydra Palace Hotel - which is the headquarters of the UN Force on the Island – further details are available in the Appendix). Mr Nicholas Whyte, who stated he was the author of the Report (surprisingly enough the written Report is not signed by anyone), said that he was beginning in Nicosia a three-legged presentation tour that would also bring him to Athens and then Istanbul.

at all (Lordos 2004: 26). Lordos therefore concludes that '[t]he proposition that the understanding of the Plan by Greek Cypriots is distorted and partial and that the responsibility of such distortion lies with the Greek Cypriot leadership does not appear to be supported by the evidence' (Lordos 2004: 75).

The above approach is comforted by the result of a recent poll. On the basis of the already mentioned survey (Lordos 2004: 49), it is possible to argue that the NO vote won because of the following reasons in decreasing order of importance (Lordos 2004: 37-64):

- withdrawal of Turkish troops much sooner than foreseen in the Plan (76%);
- Turkey should pay compensation for those who do not have their property returned (75%);
- A greater number of Turkish settlers should go back to Turkey than provided for in the Plan (75%);
- the overall cost of reunification should be more equally shared by all parties, and not just the Greek-Cypriots (73%);
- there should be solid international guarantees for the implementation of a final agreement, with serious consequences for any violations (72%);
- the new state should be the legal successor to the current Republic and not a totally new state (66%);
- the future influx of Turks should be limited (64%);
- return of property should be greater than provided for in the Plan (63%);
- guarantor powers should not have the right of unilateral intervention (61%);
- all Turkish and Greek troops should eventually go (58%).

All of the above is presented here in order to show how weak the proposed Plan for reunification was in the first place. To stress that the overwhelming majority of the Greek-Cypriots has rejected it and that therefore the situation post-referenda is different from the one before if only because it is not possible to pretend that the referenda did not take place. Finally, and most importantly for what follows in Part Three, to emphasize how hostile the post-referenda environment, especially in the EU and the EP, was for those who were

trying to change it, in particular the Cypriot MEPs. Thus, their job was rendered difficult not only because it was the first time ever that Cypriot MEPs took part in the EP's workings. The overall *ambience* was pretty negative towards them.

### **PART THREE: THE VIEWS OF (GREEK-)CYPRIOT MEPS**

The main purpose of this third paper is to present and assess the views of the Greek-Cypriot MEPs who have been sitting in the EP since June 2004<sup>38</sup>. The reason for doing so is to try and find out if these parliamentarians believe that parliamentary diplomacy has played (or, is playing, will play, can or should, play) a substantial role in efforts at finding a solution to the ongoing division and occupation of the Island. The paper is empirical and does not try to add to the very small existing theoretical literature on parliamentary diplomacy. But it is hoped that it will contribute to the building of a body of literature dealing with parliamentary diplomacy. Past research has shown clearly that parliamentary diplomacy occurs on a daily basis. But this phenomenon has yet to attract the academic interest it deserves (Stavridis 2002; for a practitioner's view see Spanish Senator Elorriaga's book (2004).

Before doing that, it is important to begin with a *cursor* analysis<sup>39</sup> of recent EP resolutions and other documents (e.g. reports) on Cyprus (but also on Turkey) in order to show if there is a positive or a negative overall approach to the Cyprus Problem in the European Parliament:

1. the first thing that strikes the observer is the amount of resolutions, debates, questions, reports dedicated to Cyprus and Turkey. This is not surprising in itself. What is surprising is to hear in some –unnamed quarters- that the Cyprus Problem is not an issue for the EU!
2. in the midst of the above plethora of documentation and other data, it is possible to identify the pro-Cyprus and the anti-Cyprus (meaning Greek-Cypriot) tendencies.

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<sup>38</sup> Such a study falls in the growing tradition of work that is based on elites-perceptions. The interviewing of elites is important not only for their expert knowledge but also as 'opinion shapers' and decision-makers. For instance see the expert survey on EU party positions, [www.unc.edu/~gwmarks/data.htm](http://www.unc.edu/~gwmarks/data.htm). See also Schmitt (2003). For a similar approach to the current study but this time applied to Turkish parliamentarians and their views on the EU, see McLaren and Müftüler-Baç (2003). Special thanks to Kyriacos Georgiou (*Intercollege*) for arranging two of the four MEPs interviews.

<sup>39</sup> There is growing interest in the subject but overall it remains an under-studied area. This is one clear finding of this research (see conclusions).

- Overall, the EPP and the United Left are more pro-Cyprus and the Socialists less so. Similarly, the EPP is anti-Turkish accession and the Socialists much more pro-Turkish accession. The Greens as a bloc<sup>40</sup>, and the majority of the Liberals, especially from the UK<sup>41</sup>, are particularly anti-Greek Cypriots and pro-Turkish Cypriots. These divisions within the EP were confirmed by the interviews with MEPs that were conducted for this piece (see below).
3. Despite, or perhaps because of, the above divisions, even 'positive' resolutions for Cyprus are not as 'positive' as they may look in the first place (the same is true of converse resolutions). Often, a slim majority only approves 'positive' resolutions. That is to say that there is no clear support for Cyprus in the EP. Or at least, not as clear as it is often presented in Cyprus. The same is true of other European-wide shows of 'support' (see the recent EPP resolution, below).
  4. all of the above means that the overall atmospherics in the EP are not too positive for the Cypriot MEPs. The fact that the EP had consistently and overwhelmingly support the 2004 Annan Plan makes this situation all the more difficult for Cyprus<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> There is controversy right now in Cyprus because the Greens have decided to organize a meeting of its Enlarged Bureau in northern Cyprus (see Bouli Hadjiioannou, 'European Greens to stay in north', *The Cyprus Weekly*, 19-25.05.06).

<sup>41</sup> A name that kept cropping up during my research is that of British Liberal MEP Andrew Duff. This does not come as a surprise to me as I had the opportunity of interviewing MEP Duff in September 2002 in Strasbourg. At the time there was talk of a Clerides-Denktaş meeting in the EP in an effort to advance the negotiations between the two Cypriot communities. Denktaş had accepted but Clerides had declined. To a large extent Clerides did so when he had seen who the sponsors had been (indeed its 'initiators', as Duff himself confirmed to me during an interview on 4 September 2002 in Strasbourg; see also *Turkish Daily News On Line*/www.turkishdailynews.com, 31.07.02, accessed on that day; for more details see Stavridis 2003: 351-352).

<sup>42</sup> Without entering in the details, the EP had qualified the Annan Plan as a 'shining example of handling equally difficult international issues' (only one week before the April 2004 referenda). For more details about some clear expressions of support to the Anna Plan, see the 21 April 2004 EP debates (President Borrell claimed that '[t]he presentation of the contents of the plan to the public has not always been equally balanced', sharing 'the concerns expressed by the UN Secretary-General in that regard'; MEP Jacques Poos, a rapporteur on Cyprus, argued that 'C'est une illusion que d'espérer qu'en cas de rejet du plan, les problèmes difficiles du retour des réfugiés, de la propriété, des troupes turques, etc. pourront trouver une solution. Le contraire est vrai. La situation actuelle sera verouillée. Pas un seul réfugié de part et d'autre ne retournera dans son village natal et pas un seul soldat turc ne quittera la zone occupée'. In particular the Liberals were very critical (see MEPs Watson, Ludford, and Davies). Only a few MEPs rejected such claims and centered their comments on the fact that the current situation was the direct result of an illegal invasion, an illegal occupation and an illegal colonization of the north of Cyprus (Greek United Left MEP Alysandrakis; British EPP MEP Tannock)).

But this paper is not about the EP and the Cyprus Problem *per se* (see Stavridis forthcoming).  
Going therefore back to Cyprus and the 2004 Euro-elections, the results were as follows:<sup>43</sup>

2004 European Parliament election results in Cyprus<sup>44</sup>

Registered voters:	483,311		
Votes cast:	350,387	72.5% turn out	
Invalid votes:	16,119	4.6%	
Valid votes:	334,268	95.4% of cast	
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Party	Votes	%	Seats
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Democratic Rally (DISY)	94,355	28.2	2
Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL)	93,212	27.9	2
Democratic Party (DIKO)	57,121	17.1	1
For Europe (Gia tin Evropi)	36,112	10.8	1
Others	53,468	16.0	-
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Total	334,268		6
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Compared to the 2001 parliamentary elections results the percentage changes are as follows<sup>45</sup>:

AKEL: -7%

DISY: -5.8%

DIKO: +2.35%

For Europe: new party

EDEK: +4.2% (with just over 11% of the vote did not have an MEP elected, short of only 37 votes).

Overall, those parties that had supported the NO vote represent 69% of the result (compared to 76% in the referendum), and those in favour of the YES vote nearly 30% (compared to 24%).

<sup>43</sup> I do not enter the wider debate about whether the EP elections are 'second-order' elections (see Schmitt 2005).

<sup>44</sup> *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Parliament\\_election,\\_2004\\_\(Cyprus\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Parliament_election,_2004_(Cyprus)), accessed Spring 2006. 'Elections of the European Parliament were held in Cyprus on June 13, 2004. This was the first time Cypriot voters had elected members of the European Parliament. (...) The number of registered voters was 483,311 – out of which 503 were Turkish Cypriots and 2054 EU nationals. (...) [There were] 59 candidates for 6 seats.' The websites of the main political parties are available in Annex 4. For more on the politics of Cyprus, see Peristianis (2006).

<sup>45</sup> [www.in.gr](http://www.in.gr): [in Greek] 'AKEL is the biggest loser in the euro-elections, whereas EDEK goes to the court for the sixth seat', 14.06.04 (accessed on that day).

The following six candidates were elected as the first Cypriot MEPs:

Ioannis Kasoulides (DISY);  
Panayotis Demetriou (DISY);  
Adam Adamou (AKEL);  
Kyriakos Triantaphyllides (AKEL);  
Marios Matsakis (DIKO);  
Yannis Matsis (For Europe).

The two Cypriot MEPs from the DISY and the one from 'For Europe' have joined the EPP, the two from AKEL have joined the United Left, and the one from DIKO the Liberal Democrats.

This part covers the 2004-2006 period in an effort to assess the impact of the presence of 6 Cypriot MEPs in the EP. This section consists of the results of research carried out by the author in March-April 2006. It consisted mainly of interviewing Cypriot MEPs, as well as a number of party officials or parliamentary candidates (to the May 2006 national parliamentary elections). There was also use of other primary sources (especially EP verbatim debates and resolutions), as well as secondary sources (academic work but also media coverage). This Part does not cover other parliamentary bodies such as the PACE, the OSCE PA, or the IPU. This missing dimension is identified (see conclusions) as one of the areas that would need to be examined in further research.

Particular attention is given to the MEPs, especially over how they acted after the 2004 referenda. Before the referenda, it had been clearly argued that any rejection of the Plan would represent a major failure for all concerned, and that no alternative plan would ever emerge again. Thus, it is important to assess what the Greek Cypriot MEPs have done in the EP in order to understand what role, if any, parliamentary diplomacy can play in that particular political arena.

The above provides a general context to the following part on the views of Greek-Cypriot parliamentarians. What follows in this Part is a detailed study of how Greek-Cypriot MEPs address the Problem. I have concentrated on four of the six MEPs. It represents 2/3 of them. Ideally, I would have liked to interview all six of them. But real life (my own time

constraints) means that this was not possible for me to interview one of them (MEP Adamos Adamou). The reason for not interviewing MEP Marios Matsakis results from a totally different perspective. Matsakis has become involved in a national and international political-judicial saga. First, he is accused of arts trafficking. Second, in late October 2005, he entered the Green Line no entry zone and removed a Turkish flag. When he attempted to return to flag, the Turkish-Cypriots authorities arrested him. There is a debate going on right now about whether to remove his parliamentary immunity with regard to his alleged involvement in trafficking<sup>46</sup>. The Cypriot government condemned Matsakis' 'Turkish flag affair'<sup>47</sup>. DIKO has now kicked him out of the Party. The charges against him in the flag incident were eventually dropped<sup>48</sup>. But the saga is far from over. In April 2006, Matsakis staged a demonstration outside the British Base of Akrotiri (near the city of Limassol), claiming that British troops had 'pointed guns at him'. In early May he was arrested outside the Episkopi police station (again near Akrotiri), where only a couple of days earlier he had sprayed the acronym 'EOKA' on a car<sup>49</sup>. I therefore concluded that this was neither the best time nor the right person to interview for an academic study on the Cyprus Problem.

From the interviews<sup>50</sup>, the following findings can be made (written up in a chronological manner)<sup>51</sup>:

**The first interview** MEP Yannakis Matsis– interviewed 31 March (70 minutes). He is a former President of DISY and a veteran politician. The British killed his brother during the 'war of independence' and all those victims are known as 'national heroes' in Cyprus. He is

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<sup>46</sup> [www.in.gr/news](http://www.in.gr/news), 01.11.05.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid; see also [www.in.gr/news](http://www.in.gr/news), 01.01.06.

<sup>48</sup> *The Cyprus Weekly*, 10-16 March 2006.

<sup>49</sup> *The Cyprus Weekly*, 7-13.04.06; [in Greek] *O Fileleftheros*, 01.05.06; *The Cyprus Weekly*, 5-11.05.06.

<sup>50</sup> Full list of interviewees in Annex 1. See also Annex 3 for a guideline questionnaire I used as a basis of my interviewing. But I left it quite open in general. This is by no means a structured approach on purpose. Based on past research I found it more fruitful to 'follow the flow' as it were.

<sup>51</sup> I gave all interviewees the chance to edit my text based on their respective interviews (via emails). Each one of them only saw their own interview report. Two of the four did make some minor changes. The other two did not respond, and I had told them that, if they did not do so, I would assume there was nothing they wanted to change. The main reason why I asked them to have a look stems from the fact that the interviews were conducted in Greek and the final text is in English, and also because sometimes some points are misunderstood or misinterpreted in interviews. I do not want to be accused of having put 'words in their mouths' as it were.

also a member of the EP's Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee. He was a member of the Cypriot Parliament during 1981-1997 and is a Member of PACE and of the IPU. During the interview, Matsis stressed how he had always believed that the 'salvation' of Cyprus would come through EU and NATO memberships. Therefore, he was particularly pleased with the Republic's 2004 EU accession. He also emphasized his good relations over the years with Washington and made clear his disagreement over former President Clerides' preference for good links with Moscow. Matsis told me that the only real reason for his desire to become an MEP at his age (he said he had just turned 72) was because of the Annan Referendum. As an 'independent' MEP he wants to contribute to what is a question of survival for Cyprus. He sees his role in the EP as one of informing the EP about the Cyprus Problem. He also considers that the EU has a duty and a responsibility to help solve the Cyprus Problem now that the Republic of Cyprus has become one of its members. His main objective is to find a solution that is based on European principles. He sees it as his obligation to make sure the Annan Plan is finished for good because it was not a compromise, but a 'surrender to foreigners'. Most Greek-Cypriots would have had to migrate if the Plan had been accepted.

Matsis also emphasized how he has always supported Turkey's accession to the EU and how good his personal relations with Turks and Turkish-Cypriots have always been. In practical terms, he stressed that a census was required in the Turkish-held north of the Island because there are formal commitments to the need to reverse its Turkification and to stop the cultural destruction that has taken and is taken place there (he referred to PACE report by Cuco in 1994 in particular). He also said that those issues are raised in the EU-Turkey JPC but also that he would accompany them with proposals for more cooperation with Turkey, especially over environmental issues.

He argued that for the sake of all Cypriots, Turkish troops must go. He sees Turkish settlers as one of the main obstacles for a solution. He complained about the fact that the current situation on the island means that Cyprus is the most militarized area in the world (according to Annan himself he said). He wants to 'convince the Turkish-Cypriots of the need to help us [Greek-Cypriots] to save ourselves in order to help them save themselves'.

Matsis considers that the EP overall does not want Turkey to join the EU. That criticism is growing, including in political groups that were not so critical in the past. The EPP is simply not in favour of full Turkish membership. With the exception of very few like the Greens: 'they who simply do not want to listen', as he put it. They have 'the wrong views' and they have always been 'pro-Turkish', he added. He thinks that Turkey has never been in such a difficult situation before. He also suspects that had the Annan Plan be approved, it would have led to a delay in Cyprus' accession as the Greek-Cypriots would have been asked to wait for the Turkish-Cypriot side to adapt its legislation to the *acquis communautaire*.

As for parliamentary diplomacy, he welcomed the increased international clout that the EP is acquiring especially over the Commission, but he accepted that at the end of the day the Executive (Council) remains in charge of diplomatic relations. He thinks that in diplomacy one needs to show flexibility, caution and respect. Overall parliamentary bodies help (e.g. the EMP). Diplomacy is an 'art' where one must defend their own national interests. But, surprisingly, he did not like the way the Cypriot Parliament worked on international affairs and especially the Cyprus Problem. A typical Greek 'black and white approach', he complained.

He complained about the fact that for 4-5 days each week, Cypriot MEPs are in Brussels (or Strasbourg) and only 2-3 days in Cyprus. From Nicosia to Strasbourg it would take them 14 hours usually and that obviously is not a very pleasant situation for someone to be in once a month.

**The second interview** was with Ioannis Kasoulides— interviewed 3 April 2006 (60 minutes), MEP for DISY, and a former Cypriot foreign minister (1997-2003). He is also a member of the EP's Committee on Foreign Affairs, and a member of the EP's delegation to the EMP Parliamentary Assembly. Kasoulides stressed the fact that the best way to promote the importance of the Cyprus Problem in the EP is through an MEP's wider recognition of his contribution on topics of general European concern. As a former foreign minister he said he was strongly appreciated as an expert on many issues, but of course not on all issues. He

specifically listed the following ones: Mediterranean, Euro-Med, immigration, Middle East, Lebanon, Morocco, and the Western Sahara (as a rapporteur in the last two cases).

As he is also an EP Bureau member he enjoys increased visibility. He says that the reason why Cyprus is lucky right now is that Turkey wants to join the EU. As a result the scrutiny process is such that there is growing opposition to its joining, a feeling that reflects largely public opinion in most EU member states. In the EPP, the German CDU, the Austrian, and the French supporting Sarkozy are particularly opposed to Turkish membership, whereas the British, Spanish and Italian EPP MEPs are in favour. The Left is divided over the issue, many Socialist MEPs – including from PASOK but not all of them – often vote with the Right over Turkey.

Kasoulides does not think the EU can solve the Cyprus Problem. In fact, he does not think there is a 'European solution' to it because there are so many different opinions within the EU. He clearly sees the EP as an obstacle to Turkey's accession because of its many powers, including delaying negotiations or even imposing sanctions. He also mentioned other indirect means, for instance through the EP's budget committee to limit EU aid to Turkey by reducing it by the precise amount it is estimated that Cyprus is penalized because its ships cannot use Turkish ports. A tactic tried by New Democracy MEP Antonis Samaras, but without success, this year. He was not surprised by the EP's acceptance of the EU Council view on how to deal with the non-recognition of Cyprus by Turkey on the grounds that the Cypriot government is part of the Council now. He also said that now that Cyprus has joined the EU its political security is guaranteed. He was also quite pleased that the EP had not followed the PACE in its recent decision to grant observer status to Turkish-Cypriot parliamentarians<sup>52</sup>. He criticized the Greens and the Liberals in the EP for wanting such a development. Instead, a contact group led by MEP Grossetete has been set up. He relish to report the fact that the Group had asked the Turkish-Cypriots they met what was the need

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<sup>52</sup> This point was also made by other MEPs and a number of people I discussed this issue informally (see Annex 1). The Cypriot Parliament also paid special attention to this problem, see its [in Greek] *Report of Activities*, Nicosia, September 2005, pp 11-12.

for the continued presence of the Turkish troops now that the Green Line could be crossed so easily!

Overall, he considers parliamentary diplomacy as easier than traditional diplomacy because there exist fewer constraints, especially over double standards on human rights. As an example of the impact of the 2004 enlargement he mentioned the creation of an Commonwealth Friendship Group in the EP thanks to British, Maltese and Cypriot support. But he sees it as a peripheral activity, which facilitates the general ‘atmospherics’ in international relations. He complained about the absence of any links between the EP and the Cypriot Vouli. He also complained about the difficult travel links between Cyprus and Strasbourg and referred me to a recent article on the question in the Cypriot press<sup>53</sup>. But overall he thinks that the Cypriot media do not know much about the EU, something he regrets. He also regretted that the Cypriot Parliament’s European Committee is not doing more about the links between Cypriot MPs and MEPs. He characteristically said that ‘institutionally speaking in Cyprus Cypriot MEPs do not exist’.

**The third interview** was with Panayotis Demetriou– interviewed 12 April (40 minutes), MEP for DISY, and a former Head of the Cypriot delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (1997-2001), as well as an observer in the European Parliament of the Cypriot Parliament during 2003-2004 (before Cyprus joined the Union). He therefore had experienced the EP before, during and immediately after the referenda on the Annan Plan. During the interview, Demetriou said that during this preliminary phase (as an observer), he tried to ‘rightly’ inform the EP on the Cyprus issue and to influence the position of the EPP, the group to which the DISY was affiliated to, prior to EU accession. Demetriou stressed the very strong negative views of then Commissioner for Enlargement Verheugen in a chat he had with him in the European Parliament Hemicycle on 21 April 2004, that is to say three days before the referenda. Demetriou was with Greek MEP Marinos, and Verheugen told Demetriou verbatim, in Demetriou’s own words:

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<sup>53</sup> Kosta Pavlowitch, ‘Who want to be an MEP? A gruelling brief’ [uncorrected spelling], *Sunday Mail*, 2 April 2006: [www.cyprus-mail.com](http://www.cyprus-mail.com) (accessed 03.04.06).

‘You cheated me, you will pay for it, there was an agreement for both accession and a solution, Papadopoulos had agreed at the Hague about the Annan Plan; do you have a democracy in Cyprus? Who are you to prevent me from addressing the Cypriot people on TV. I will *kill* Tasos Papadopoulos for what he did’ (my own emphasis added).

Still in his own words, after many failed attempts to stop that attack, Demetriou replied that he considers Verheugen as the Father of Enlargement. He also emphasized that on 21 April 2004 the Commissioner had made a statement where he had stated that that he considered the Cyprus Problem to be a UN issue and not a EU problem.

During the 4 May 2004 EP debate on Cyprus, the Socialist Group, including the Greek PASOK MEP members, produced a series of very hostile views on the result. The EPP was not as critical. Mr Demetriou had met both Elmar Brok and Hans-Gert Poettering and had explained to them the complications of the Annan Plan, and of course its weaknesses. The United European Left Group MEPs were overall friendly to the Greek Cypriots. The most hostile were the Greens and the Liberals.

Since then, Demetriou says that he has tried to get a more positive view of the EP especially with the Socialist Group, as the EPP is already more supportive and highly critical of Turkey’s accession to the EU. He has centered his work of persuasion<sup>54</sup> on four points: to acknowledge disappointment over the failure to find a solution; to recognize that the UN Secretary General himself fails to take into account the sensitivities of the Greek-Cypriots; to accept that the Cyprus Problem is not only a UN problem but also an EU one; to find a solution that is acceptable to both Cypriot communities within the principles of the EU. In this effort, he said that EDEK (Socialist) Party leader Yannakis Omirou is being very helpful. But in spite of a series of meetings with the leaders of the Socialist Group, Demetriou says that he has not managed to convince them, especially MEPs Schultz, Wiersma, and Swoboda. The main problem for the Socialist Group in the EP is that even if they are less hostile than in the recent past they do not think that the Greek Cypriots really

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<sup>54</sup> On 14 September 2004, Demetriou circulated a short memo to all MEPs (full text provided to the author by email by Mr Demetriou himself. See Annex 5).

want a solution, or at least they suspect that at the end of the day the Greek Cypriots do not really want a solution.

As for the EPP, the situation is totally different. Not only because of that Group's particular opposition to Turkey's accession to the EU, but also because of its leadership stand on the Cyprus Problem itself. The December 2004 Eurlings Report (a Dutch MEP) includes a number of provisions that reflect those of the Greek Cypriots (especially, paragraph 44 on the EU philosophy for a solution to the Cyprus Problem). As for the EPP's recent resolution (see Annex 6), on Cyprus he claims that he participated in its drafting, and he sees it as extremely positive and the best that could be achieved under the current circumstances. For the Socialists, he notes better understanding now. In his view, the most hostile group remains that of the Greens, especially Daneil Cohn-Bendit and Joost Lagendijk, as well as a German MEP (of Turkish origin) Cem Özdemir. Both Joost and Ozdemir are being currently critical of human rights violations in Turkey's South East (a euphemism for Kurdistan) but also terrorist attacks in Istanbul (carried out by Kurds). Demetriou considers all this to be a tactical move to present the Greens as objective observers and therefore strengthen their long term objective of Turkish accession to the EU.

As for the current Commissioner for Enlargement Ollie Rhen, Demetriou thinks he only uses the Cyprus Problem as a means to put pressure on Turkey on human rights issues. As for EP President Borrell, he was initially very critical of Cyprus as was the whole Socialist Group in the Parliament, but he has slightly changed his position following a number of meetings with Cypriot politicians: Borrell has visited Cyprus and met President Papadopoulos. Although Borrell remains unconvinced of the Cypriot President's commitment to a 'feasible' solution, he does not take a totally negative view any longer.

Demetriou stressed that what matters in the EP is to build coalitions. Often one MEP must vote against his own stand on less important issues in order to get the support of other MEPs over Cyprus. He also acknowledged the existence of parliamentary diplomacy and he thought that for weaker countries it represents their only weapon. Again, building alliances is therefore crucial and in the EP personal relations are extremely important. But one has to

use his or her links in a proper manner. He mentioned the recent example of Greek MEP Karatzaferis who tabled an amendment to Brok's report on Enlargement, demanding the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus. In fact, it represented a repetition of the relevant provision in the previous Eurlings Report (paragraph 44). Brok considered it to be therefore unnecessary and had made it clear that he would not accept such a reference. Demetriou says he told his Greek colleague not to insist on such an amendment. Karatzaferis did not follow his advice. The amendment was rejected by an alliance of EPP and Socialist members, and, of course, the Greens and the Liberals.

As for the EP 'contact group' with Turkish Cypriots, Demetriou it might prove to be a positive development. Indeed, it has not lead to any recognition of the 'Turkish Cypriot state'. He praised the work of MEPs Françoise Grossetete and Mechtild Rothe (he views Verheugen and Rothe as the main factors behind Cyprus's EU accession). Grossetete in particular has made clear that this contact group does not mean any recognition of an independent state. Demetriou also stressed the importance of the reference to 'representatives', and not to 'elected representatives', for the Turkish Cypriot side.

**The fourth interview** was with Kyriakos Triantaphyllides – interviewed 13 April (55 minutes). He is an MEP for AKEL – Left – New Forces. He is a former Director General of the Cypriot Interior Ministry (2000-2004) and he has participated as a senior government representative in the past in many international conferences and institutions (UN, Council of Europe, EU). Triantaphyllides considers that EU accession represents a critical time for the Cyprus Problem. The 2004 referendum means that there is a 'before' and an 'after' approach to that issue. Before the referendum, among not only those states or organizations involved in the Problem (the UN; the USA; the UK), but even among those not concerned nor interested, the wider perception was that a solution would be accepted prior to EU accession and that, as a result, Cyprus would join as one of 10 new members, without any problem attached to its accession. The massive NO result in the referendum altered those expectations. The overall reaction was rather negative: the Greek-Cypriots were perceived as a nuisance.

Triantaphyllides argues that within a few months, such a negative climate has turned overall into a much more positive situation. He says this only happened as a result of a collective effort by all Greek-Cypriots who have engaged in an explanation campaign worldwide: the President and the government; the Cypriot Vouli; finally, the Cypriot MEPs who have done a very good job in the EP with 'colleagues who wanted to listen'. He therefore implied that some MEPs are simply not willing to listen.

Another reason, and on this point there seems to be consensus among all Cypriot MEPs and beyond, the fact that Turkey is on the EU accession agenda means that the overall position in its favour (mainly through US pressure) begins to unravel as many Europeans see the reality of Turkish behaviour: in particular, Turkey's non-application of agreements such as the extension of the Ankara Protocol to all new EU members including Cyprus. There are more and more anti-Turkish accession supporters within the EU, and in the EP especially, not because they worry about the Cyprus Problem but because they see the many reasons why Turkey is not ready for membership. In the EP, the three dominant issues are human rights violations in Turkey, the way Turkey deals with the Kurds, and the Cyprus Problem. In his view, the overall context is changing and this change (i.e. a more favourable view of Cyprus) is reflected in a number of specific issues (aid to the Turkish-Cypriots; direct trade with the occupied part of the Island). Whereas there was clear support for moving fast on those issues in the past, especially immediately after the referenda results, this is no longer so currently.

Triantaphyllides also stressed that all Cypriot MEPs are in favour of Turkish accession under the correct circumstances; that they all favour aid to the Turkish-Cypriot community; and that they all think that, thanks to the beginning of Turkey's accession process (especially the granting of a date and the actual beginning of accession negotiations),

Turkey would shift its stance on the Cyprus Problem. He lamented that of course on the last point, events have proved them all wrong.

He thinks it is a positive development that direct trade issues and aid issues (to the Turkish Cypriots) have now been de-linked in spite of pressure from Britain (through the EU Council, the Commission and the EP). It is now clear to all that such a development cannot be avoided, if only for legal reasons. As for which groups are favouring Cyprus or Turkey in the EP, Triantaphyllides confirmed the division between the highly critical of Turkey EPP and United Left, a mixed Socialist group, and the many very anti-Cyprus (Greek-Cypriots) Liberals and all the Greens. When asked if nationality mattered, his answer was negative, except for some British MEPs who are traditionally anti-Cyprus, mainly for past historic reasons.

Triantaphyllides also mentioned that the promotion of the Convention on the Future of Europe indirectly helped Cyprus because during its ratification stage, especially in countries holding referenda, there were clear signs of public opposition to Turkey's accession, not least for its behaviour in Cyprus. Even in countries where no referenda were held, there were signs of protest at not allowing citizens to have a direct say. He also stressed that he understood somewhat why it is difficult for Turkey to recognize Cyprus but he thinks it is less understandable why it does not extend its Customs Union to it. Of course, he lamented both situations.

As for parliamentary diplomacy, he sees the EP as the best place for it to take place because of the way the EP works: it is not a traditional parliament. It does not have a government and an opposition. Compromise among all political groups in particular is always needed. He also sees the EP as an important forum for political debate, including parliamentary diplomacy, not only because it is where senior Commissioners and other Commission officials answer questions (he

stressed Barroso's presence), but also where heads of states from third countries made important addresses.

As for better links between Cypriot MPs and MEPs, he thinks that a big improvement is both possible and desirable. He thinks the MEP has not entered the Cypriot parliamentary life yet. It is something new for Cyprus. He mentioned Greek MEPs and their excellent links with the Greek Parliament<sup>55</sup>. The way Cypriot MEPs work is through their personal or political links with their respective political parties. As himself is not a member of AKEL but part of NEES DINAMEIS (an attached political associations), he basically uses his personal contacts. As an anecdote he contrasted his experience with that of an Estonian MEP (a former diplomat) who said he would talk to Estonia's foreign minister every 1 to 2 weeks: this simply did not happen in Cyprus. There is some information from the Vouli's Committee on EU affairs about European legislation but mainly because most of it must be implemented at the national level. He acknowledged that it is possible for Cypriot MEPs to attend the meetings of the Vouli's committee on the EU but in practice this does not happen because they are in Brussels when these meetings take place<sup>56</sup>.

As for his view of how the EP works as a whole now that he has been an MEP for nearly two years (as well as participating in the Council of Europe activities), Triantaphyllides mentioned that reforms had to take place in the way the plenary works. Most, if not all, work is actually done in the committees, as well as in the political groups. This is not unique to the EP. Most modern parliaments now work in that manner. He sees plenary meetings as a 'theater of shadows', with no substance, and with high levels of absenteeism. As there are 732 MEPs and it is necessary to request speaking time in advance (5 minutes for the leader of a political group;

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<sup>55</sup> On the contrary, the Cypriot Parliament does not seem to share those concerns, claiming instead that the relationship between Cypriot MPs and MEPs is rather excellent (see its [in Greek] *Report of Activities*, Nicosia, September 2005, pp 18-19).

<sup>56</sup> Greek MEPs have also made similar complaints because meetings are scheduled in Athens on Thursday evenings when they still are in Brussels or Strasbourg.

3 minutes for a rapporteur; 1 minutes all other MEPS), he said that to date he had made fifty 'one minute' interventions. He would have very much preferred to have 10 minutes in one go. Although he acknowledged that the current system does push MEPs to be short and straight to the point.

Triantaphyllides also argues that the role of the EP or the Cypriot Vouli is rather limited on the Cyprus problem the President of the Republic and the *Ethniko Symvoulío* actually take the relevant decisions. Over the Cyprus Problem, MEPs have more contact with the Cypriot government than with the Cypriot Vouli. Before each EP Plenary in Strasbourg, all 6 Cypriot MEPs meet for an informal dinner to develop a common stance over the Cyprus Problem. He does not think the EP can play a decisive role in the Cyprus Problem. The EU can mainly through the application and implementation of the *acquis communautaire*. In that respect, he stressed that all past ideas and concepts (e.g. 'Gallie' etc) are not really relevant any more as the overall impact will come through European Law now that Cyprus has joined the EU.

As for specific instances of EP involvement, he stressed how important the Eurlings Report on Turkey has been. Also he confirmed that despite intense Turkish pressure, the EP did not accept the PACE route to having Turkish Cypriot observers (without voting rights). Instead, the EP preferred to set up a High Level Group whose role it is to report to the Conference of Presidents (of political groups), not even to the Plenary. Each political party has one representative and all 8 of them must deal with civil society, not with Turkish Cypriot 'institutions', as some had intended.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

To conclude, what this paper has also touched upon indirectly is the fact that the EP could play a much bigger role in the Cyprus Problem. There have been such calls in the recent past: for instance, the International Expert Panel Report calls for the EP to pass a resolution confirming the need to respect International and European rules for the set of basic Fundamental Principles that the International Expert Panel Report proposes (2005: 15). EDEK's President Giannakis Omirou has repeatedly called for the appointment of a

EU Special Representative for the Cyprus Problem in his electoral campaign (May 2006 parliamentary elections). Omirou stressed that such an envoy should depend also from the UN Secretary-General<sup>57</sup>. But Cypriots in general and MEPs in particular are not dupes: the EU cannot be a panacea as the issue is mainly an international one. However, following the May 2004 EU accession, the reverse is equally true: it is also a European Union issue. The MEPs interviewed in this research project all confirm that they consider their personal role as positive overall, although most accept that this might be due more to the current debate over Turkey's accession. This is in my view a fundamental point: if the EU in general (institutions and member states) and the EP in particular use the Cyprus issue just as a means to achieve a wider strategic aim (Turkey accession), there is little doubt that the Cyprus Question will not be solved on its own merits. Cyprus will be used a tactical objective in a wider strategic one. If, on the contrary, the Cypriots manage to convince their fellow Europeans that there is a strong case for solving the Cyprus Issue because it represents an unacceptable violation of fundamental rights and international law, as well as European law, then one could be more optimistic.

It also stems from the current research that one of the weaknesses of the existing Cypriot presence in the EP has to do with the fact that there is no Greek-Cypriot representative in the Socialist Group, the second largest political grouping in Strasbourg/Brussels. Moreover, the current EP President belongs to the Socialist Group, and the Group is one of the strongest backers of Turkey's accession to the Union. It is possible that a merger between EDEK and DIKO<sup>58</sup> takes place after the May 2006 parliamentary elections. Such a development would be positive if only because it would allow DIKO politicians to join the Socialist Group in the EP and the Socialist International worldwide.

There is also the particular problem of MEP Matsakis, who appears to be suffering serious personal problems. There seems to be general agreement that Matsakis represents a serious embarrassment for his party, the President of Cyprus, the Cypriot government, Cypriot

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<sup>57</sup> Various TV programmes during the electoral period.

<sup>58</sup> DIKO parliamentary candidate Christos Yiangou (Nicosia, 31 March 2006).

parliamentarians, and for Cyprus itself<sup>59</sup>. As for the remaining two MEPs, they belong to the United Left Party, a group that had voted against EU enlargement in 2004<sup>60</sup>. The three remaining Cypriot MEPs, as noted above, belong to the EPP. But even they possess a limited influence if only because of their small numbers. Thus, the recently much vaunted EPP resolution on Cyprus only contains five positive elements versus four rather more negative ones<sup>61</sup>.

Also, as noted above, the political parties that did not elect any MEP totalled 53,468 votes between them (16% share of the total electorate of 334,268). Perhaps something should be done in order to avoid that such a high share of the popular vote is not represented in the EP. A solution might be for the Cypriots to begin voting tactically, i.e. differently in national elections from Euro-elections, knowing that they need to elect MEPs at least in each of the two major groups (EPP and Socialists). This tactical voting will come after a while. It is important to note that voters do tend to adapt to the various electoral processes they are engaged in over time.

Another conclusion on this question has to do with the fact that because there are so few MEPs for Cyprus due to its demographics, it is perhaps the country where MEPs are also very active in other inter-parliamentary assemblies. Something that could be seen as a drawback if only for reasons of time, but that could also be regarded as an advantage because of the ‘communicating vessels’ principle<sup>62</sup> that previous work on parliamentary

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<sup>59</sup> This came out quite clearly in all interviews, both formal and informal (see Annex 1).

<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to note that during the pre-2004 enlargement phase, Greek communist MEPs had differentiated their position from that of their fellow MEPs by abstaining on Cyprus. However, in the very last vote they joined the bloc’s opposition to enlargement on the traditional communist ideological grounds of the EU as an economic arm of US imperialism. Officially, the final vote was justified on the grounds that the Greek Communist Party had also opposed Greece’s accession to the (then) EEC (*Kathimerini-English Edition*, 15.04.03). It is however equally important to note that after having initially opposed Cyprus’ candidacy for EU membership, the Cypriot AKEL (Communist) Party later agreed to support it in a bid to facilitate a solution to the Island’s division. So it is even more surprising that the Greek Communist MEPs do not agree with their Cypriot counterparts, although it should be noted that the AKEL Party has never really been a revolutionary party but rather an ‘establishment party’ (for details, see Stavridis 2003).

<sup>61</sup> On the rather positive side, one could list points 1-4-6-7-8; on the rather negative side, points 2-3-5-9. See Annex 6.

<sup>62</sup> Thus, during the 2002 Cyprus-EU JPC (Joint Parliamentary Committee) meeting in Nicosia, MEP Pere Esteve –who sadly has died since- was invited to attend in order to organize a meeting between Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians on its fringe. Due to unforeseen circumstances (the Bethlehem Church siege),

diplomacy (Stavridis 2002) has identified as a possible positive development both in terms of parliamentary control (scrutiny) and in terms of information and knowledge in international affairs (parliamentary diplomacy).

Here it might be useful to carry out a systematic study of Cypriot political parties links with European-wide political groupings<sup>63</sup>. Above, many interviewees mentioned those links as crucial in their efforts at finding a solution to the Cyprus Problem. Two levels should be addressed: first, changing balances of power within those groupings according to whether or not the groupings under study are in power in most EU countries, or, on the contrary, are in opposition (e.g. McLaren and Müftüler-Baç mention that the key reason why the EU shifted its position on Turkey between 1997 and 1999 was the coming to power of the SDP-led coalition of Schroeder; McLaren and Müftüler-Baç 2003: 216, note 10); second, the coherence and cohesion of those groups should also be analyzed (again, McLaren and Müftüler-Baç mention that the 4 March 1997 EPP declaration reads as follows: 'The European Union is a civilization project and within this civilization project, Turkey has no place'; McLaren and Müftüler-Baç 2003: 202).

What is clearly missing from this work is a study of the views of non-Cypriot MEPs and other parliamentarians. This is mainly due to the short time frame available for the research in the topic, but also the fact that parliamentary elections in Cyprus in May 2006 meant that

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the event did not take place but it shows how the communicating vessels principle might work in parliamentary diplomacy.

<sup>63</sup> A systematic study of what parliamentarians and would-be parliamentarians think about the Cyprus Problem (and the EU role) would also be an interesting research work. As the May 2006 elections campaign was in full swing during my stay in Nicosia, I interviewed Christos Yiangou, in charge of *DIKO*'s external relations, and one of its parliamentary candidates. What follows is an edited version for reasons of space. Yiangou emphasized the importance of the Media in Cyprus in creating a two-level society: the real one (where clientelism plays its role to the full), and the superficial one (a political arena where the 'fight' takes place, but it is just one of impressions). Most political adversaries in the press, on the radio or TV are actually friends, often, family relatives. The 'tension' is 'manufactured' to justify why there are political differences. To support his view, he referred to the fact that Parliament adopts by consensus (usually at the committee level) 95% of internal legislation. The real differences appear over *how* to deal with the Cyprus Problem. The 2004 referendum has had a particularly negative impact because it has led to even sharper criticisms and debate. New parties have appeared as its direct result. He also complained about the lack of resources for the international dimension of *DIKO*. He praised the work of *DIKO* MPs in the PACE. Yiangou also considered that 'parliamentary diplomacy' occurs over the Cyprus Problem. He saw it as a means to build up coalitions in Europe and worldwide. He had overall a positive view of this phenomenon. It is important to note that he had also worked in the Foreign Ministry for three years prior to his current post in *DIKO*.

a re-organization of the initial agenda for this particular research project had to be made. Its absence clearly points to further research work needed in the future. For instance a comparative study of how parliamentarians behave on the Cyprus Problem across the existing European-wide transnational parliamentary assemblies could be extremely useful (EP, PACE, OSCE PA, IPU, NAA, WEU assembly<sup>64</sup>). Similarly, a comprehensive comparative analysis of national EU parliaments could be quite useful. In particular, attention should be given to what can be called ‘problematic parliaments’, or more neutrally defined ‘key parliaments’ (Britain, Germany, France, Italy but also the Netherlands), in the sense that they have shown signs in the past of not such a positive behaviour vis-à-vis an enlargement that would include a still-divided Cyprus<sup>65</sup>. This dimension is important for two reasons: first, there have been parliamentary discussions, including debates, about Turkey in most EU national parliaments (in addition to the EP). They have led to bitter clashes between diverging views. One such recent case is that of the French Parliament. There was a debate in December 2004 but no vote, because the French executive wanted to avoid a problem on the eve of the European Council decision that gave the go-ahead for accession negotiations to begin in October 2005. But, the French case is symptomatic of many future parliamentary problems elsewhere<sup>66</sup>. Second, there no clear popular support among the EU member states. Recent *Eurobarometer* surveys confirm this situation<sup>67</sup>. Thus, both national

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<sup>64</sup> For instance, the IPU has set up a Committee to Monitor the Situation in Cyprus ([www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)).

<sup>65</sup> For details, see Stavridis (2003).

<sup>66</sup> The solution that the French executive adopted was to promise a referendum on Turkey at the time of accession. The French Constitution has been amended to allow for such referenda once the 2007 candidates have joined (Romania and Bulgaria). Only new applicant and candidate states will have to go through a referendum, currently Croatia and Turkey. Austria has also shown signs of deciding a similar referendum process. For details see *Le Monde*, 08.10.04, 11.10.04, 12.10.04, 13.10.04, 14.10.04; *AFP* 13.10.04; *El País*, 22.12.04. See also the French PM’s speech to the National Assembly on 27.10.04 ([www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr](http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr); accessed 05.11.04). On the referendum solution, see the critique by Pierre Moscovici (Socialist, former European minister) in *Le Monde*, 18.10.04. He calls the idea an ‘irresponsible proposal’. There are now similar ‘noises’ about future enlargement referenda in Austria, Greece and ... Cyprus.

<sup>67</sup> As reported in [www.in.gr](http://www.in.gr), 20.12.05, most EU public opinions are opposed to Turkey’s accession. Even in countries where there is a relative majority in favour (that is to say the positive view is larger than the negative one), it does not amount to more than 50% (Spain, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden). It is also important to note that in some countries where the official line is pro-Turkish integration, there is a big discrepancy between governments and public opinions. A clear such case is Greece where 79% oppose Turkey’s accession. The EU’s average against membership now stands at 55%. In a more recent poll in Greece in May 2006, the following results were found: The Cyprus Problem has an impact on their daily life for nearly 70% of them (36.4% very substantial impact and 32.8% substantial impact), whereas the figures for Turkey near 68% (respectively 34% and 33.6%). Nearly 50% oppose Turkey’s accession to the EU (just over 40% say they support it), and for the 18-34 year-old group the figure rises to 60% against.

parliaments and public opinions will have to be convinced of the wisdom of the decisions taken by the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Council over recent years.

Another important question is whether or not the above tends to confirm the view that the EU in general and the EP in particular is shifting its attention from an unresolved Cyprus Problem to a Turkish Problem. Such a shift would in itself represent an important development, especially in light of general public opposition to Turkey's accession among most national public opinions. But, on a second level, it would mean perhaps that the EP has ceased to be the 'conscience of the Europeans', that is to say a moral forum on international issues. By supporting so overwhelmingly first the granting of a start-date and second the beginning of negotiations itself, the EP appears to have forgotten such an important dimension in such a *realpolitik*-driven immoral world (Realists would say amoral, conveniently 'forgetting' that this is a moral statement too). A serious analysis of the reasons why this is the case would be needed. So far there are only isolated studies about how MEPs behave on the Turkish Question (see Nas 1998; Soler 2005). But there is very little interest on the Cyprus Issue. The only scholarly study on the EP and the Cyprus Issue I am aware of is now nearly a quarter of a century old (Tsardanidis 1982). Although I have dealt with the topic myself in an indirect manner here and elsewhere (Stavridis 2003), it seems that recent and current developments among MEPs would require a new comprehensive study. Is it still the case (Tsardanidis 1982: 391-394; Stavridis 2003) that the Socialist Group is well disposed towards Cyprus? Are the Conservatives becoming more aware of the Problem or are they just using it for their more pronounced anti-Turkish membership policy (even if this is to be welcomed in Cyprus it also means that if it is only a tactical and not a strategic policy, the tactics may change over time)? Why are the extreme parties (both Left and Right) so antipathetic to Cyprus? More worryingly, why are the Greens and the Liberals so biased against Cyprus? All these are phenomena worth exploring in a more systematic and comprehensive way.

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Finally, nearly 55% think that if Turkey joins there will be no better bilateral relations (nearly 37% declare the opposite), [in Greek] TV programme 'Proskinio', *EPT Satellite TV*, 08.05.06.

Similarly, a study on parliaments and the Kurdish Question, or the Armenian Genocide issue, could be considered as adding a comparative advantage to this study. The Kurdish Question is also important beyond strict EU enlargement considerations as the 20 million Kurds live not only in Turkey but also the fact that Kurds also live in Iran, Iraq and Syria. The Armenian issue is of particular relevance to parliaments because in the late 1990s-early 2000s both the EP and the French Parliament passed resolutions condemning the Genocide, as has done more recently, the German *Bundestag*.<sup>68</sup>

Also missing from this study is a detailed analysis of how parliamentarians from the occupied territories feel about all this. One reason for not including them in this study had to do with the short time frame for research. More importantly, parliamentary input needs to be conducted under democratic conditions. The current political situation in the north of the Island does not appear to be satisfying these conditions, even if there has been some improvement since Denktash left power. The mere presence of Turkish troops is surely an impediment to a more assertive Turkish-Cypriot policy on the issue of reunification (Bahcheli 2004: 58-59). It might also be the reason why the whole issue could continue stalemated in the near future. The key dimension in the Cyprus Problem remains that of Turkish military occupation. Parliamentarians can try and help create a better understand and awareness about a given situation. They can also offer *additional* means of pressure. But they can also hamper progress if they do not consider a particular situation to be problematic. For instance, in a 2000 survey of Turkish parliamentarians, it was made clear that they did not consider the Cyprus Problem as a key obstacle to Turkey's eventual EU membership (McLaren and Müftüleri-Baç 2003: 205-207).

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<sup>68</sup> [www.in.gr](http://www.in.gr): 17.06.05. See also the recent decision taken by Turkey to temporarily withdraw its ambassadors from Paris and Ottawa (as well as to withdraw from a NATO military exercise in Canada) because the French Parliament debated on 18 May whether to make it illegal to deny that the Armenian genocide occurred. The Canadian Parliament had recognized the Armenian genocide in 2005 and recently the Canadian PM used the term 'Armenian genocide', in *Le Monde*, 09.05.05: [www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr), accessed 10.05.06; *Kathimerini*-English edition, 13-14.05.06; *International Herald Tribune* editorial, 15.05.06: [www.iht.com](http://www.iht.com), as accessed on that day) See also *The Cyprus Weekly*, 12-18.05.06. It seems that as a result of Turkish pressure the French Parliament has postponed its decision. It is also important to note that Mahmut Kocak, an MP from the ruling Justice and Development Party, is reported to have proposed in a tit-for-tat move a bill that would make it a crime in Turkey to deny that France committed genocide in Algeria (*The Cyprus Weekly*, 19-25.05.06).

However, what parliamentarians cannot do is to change factual situations. This still remains the role of states, and other international organizations or institutions. It is time that the EU decides to act positively on the Cyprus Problem. On past record, there is no sign that this will happen (Stavridis 2005). This study also confirms that the parliamentary dimension shows similar signs overall.

(about 11775 words)

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## **ANNEXES**

### **ANNEX 1: INTERVIEWS**

#### **FORMAL INTERVIEWS WITH MEPS:**

MEP Matsis, 31 March 2006  
MEP Kasoulides, 3 April 2006  
MEP Demetriou, 12 April 2006  
MEP Triantaphyllides, 13 April 2006

#### **INFORMAL MEETINGS**

A number of informal interviews in the Cypriot Foreign Ministry (12 April and 12 May 2006), and in the Cypriot Parliament (14 April 2006). Plus the following meetings:

Mr Costas Apostolides, *EMS Economic Management Ltd* (25 March; 20 May 2006)

Prof Van Coufoudakis, *Intercollege* (13 February; 9 March 2006)

Dr Hubert Faustmann, *Intercollege* (14; 16 February 2006)

Mr Harris Georgiades, *DISY* Political Bureau member, and *DISY* parliamentary candidate in May 2006 (28 January; 25 February; 16 March; 15 May 2006)

Mr Tasos Georgiou, Head of the Cyprus Office of the European Parliament (19 May 2006)

Dr Christos Iacovou, Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies of the Cypriot Defence Ministry & *Intercollege* (28 February; 31 March 2006)

Prof Peter Loizos, *Intercollege* (24 March 2006)

Prof Nicos Peristianis, *Intercollege* (31 March 2006)

Dr Marios Sarris, *Intercollege* (2; 10; 16 February; 13; 20 March; 1 May 2006)

Mr Yannis Tirkides, *Laiki Bank* (17 February; 10 March 2006).

Mr Christos Yiangou, *DIKO* parliamentary candidate in May 2006 (31 March; 15 May 2006)

### **ANNEX 2: LECTURES, SEMINARS, CONFERENCES**

attended by the author during his stay in Cyprus (February – May 2006)

- Round-Table Discussion on *The Cyprus Question: Can there be a breakthrough in 2006?*, speakers: Andreas Theophanous (Professor of Political Economy, Intercollege) and

- Mete Hatay (Project Leader, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, International Peace Research Institute, PRIO Cyprus Center), Nicosia (26 January 2006).
- Lecture on *Europe, Turkey and Cyprus: Past, Present and Future*, speaker: Alain Blondy (Professor of Modern History, Université La Sorbonne – Paris IV), Nicosia (1 February 2006) [in French].
  - Panel Debate and presentation of the International Crisis Group (ICG) *Report on Cyprus*, speakers: Nicolas Whyte (ICG, Europe Programme Director), Andreas Theophanous (Intercollege), Erol Kaymak (Assistant Professor of Political Science), Andros Karayannis (Civil Society activist), Ergün Olgun (former member of the Turkish-Cypriot negotiating team), Nicosia (15 March 2006).
  - Conference on *A Framework of Principles for a Just Solution to the Cyprus Question*, organized by the Municipality of Keryneia and the Movement for a European Future for Cyprus, Nicosia (26-27 March 2006) – speakers (I heard on 26.03.06): Pericles Nearchou (former adviser to Greek PM Andreas Papandreou); Ioannis Mazis (Ioanian University); Marios Evriviades (Panteion University Athens), Kostas Gouliamos (Cyprus College); William Mallinson (Ioanian University & New York College, Athens); Vasos Lyssarides (Honorary President EDEK; MP; former President of the Cypriot Parliament); Anastasios Peponis (former Greek minister); Akis Tsokatzopoulos (former Greek minister, including Defence Minister); Christos Psilogenis (former Cypriot ambassador, including to Athens); Prof Kassimatis (Panteion University Athens); Constantine Chrissogonos (University of Salonica); Andreas Aggelidis, DIKO MP [in Greek].
  - Seminar on *Federalism and Subsidiarity in the EU- Lessons for Cyprus*, speakers: Prof Heinrich Neisser (Institute of Political Science, Innsbruck University, Austria), Christina Ioannou and Prof Andreas Theophanous (both at Intercollege), Nicosia (10 April 2006).
  - ECPR *Round-Table Discussion on the Cyprus Issue*, speakers: Dr Maria Hadjipavlou, Dr Erol Kaymak, Prof Andreas Theophanous, Altay Nevzat. This discussion, chaired by Dr Tim Potier, was organized within the framework of the International Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), Nicosia (25 April 2006).

### **ANNEX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE (indicative only)**

THE CYPRUS PROBLEM: DEFINITION

THE ANNAN PLAN: in favour/against; what next?

THE EU AND THE CYPRUS PROBLEM

- past role, positive/negative [criteria?]
- current role
- future role

THE ROLE OF THE EP

MEPS ONLY: their own contribution since they became MEPs in June 2004

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY (I): definition, problems, prospects

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY (II): and the Cyprus Problem

OTHER INTERPARLIAMENTARY BODIES

- international (PACE; IPU; OSCE PA; NAA; WEU; EMP PA)
- national parliaments (EU states)

#### **ANNEX 4: CYPRIOT POLITICAL PARTIES WEBSITES**

[www.akel.org.cy](http://www.akel.org.cy)

[www.disy.org.cy](http://www.disy.org.cy)

[www.diko.org.cy](http://www.diko.org.cy)

[www.cyprusgreens.org](http://www.cyprusgreens.org)

#### **ANNEX 5: DEMETRIOU LETTER**

PANAYIOTIS DEMETRIOU, MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

##### **CYPRUS: E.U. HAS TO MOVE**

The Greek Cypriots rejected last April, by a referendum, Annan's plan for the solution of the Cyprus problem.

The main reasons for the negative result of the referendum being: first, the perpetuation of the military presence and of the decisive role of Turkey in Cyprus; second, the uncertainty as to the future and in particular as to the implementation of the complicated plan; and third, the deficiencies in human rights.

Those parameters were not properly considered by the U.N. Secretary General in drafting his plan.

Unfortunately, despite the universal statements for full respect of the verdict of the people of Cyprus, certain countries and certain European Officials have been acting since then with a profound vengeance vis-a-vis the Greek Cypriots and the Republic of Cyprus.

Under the cloak of supporting economically the Turkish Cypriot community attempts are made to bypass the Republic of Cyprus. The endeavours to assist commercially and financially the Turkish Cypriots are, of course, applauded. But this should not be done in ways amounting to semi-

recognition of the "TRNC" illegal regime. Such policy is not constructive and diminishes the prospects for a solution.

This type of reaction strengthens the political forces in Cyprus and in particular within the Turkish Cypriot community, which were and are against a solution and in favour of the partition of the island.

After all, it is extremely unfair to face the Greek Cypriots with a vengeance for rejecting a plan on the above grounds, when for thirty years nobody demonstrated any sort of punishment towards Turkey, which rejected all previous UN plans, occupies almost two fifths of Cyprus and violates human rights in Cyprus.

The European Union ought to look with urgency to the substance of the Cyprus issue and to give paramount consideration to the worries of both communities, particularly to those, which led the Greek Cypriots to reject Annan's plan. The European Union should initiate in the next few months, in the course of deliberations with Turkey for accession negotiations date, new efforts for the solution of the Cyprus problem. There is no room for indifference or of rewarding one side and punishing the other. The Cyprus problem is a European problem.

Nobody should forget that Turkey has under military occupation part of European Union territory, i.e. part of the Republic of Cyprus. This is the source of the evil. This is the gist of the problem, which has to be solved.

Cyprus has to be reunited. Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots have to and can live together in a federal European Cyprus disencumbered from the custody of the motherlands.

The European Union has to take immediate action to that direction.

**PANAYIOTIS DEMETRIOU**

MEP (Republic of Cyprus), 14th September 2004

## **ANNEX 6: EPP RESOLUTION**

<http://www.eppcongress2006.org/images/dbimages/docs/resolutions.eppcongress.rome.doc?PHPS ESSID=10e9ce93f1a81bf7f2878f30817a58bf> (accessed 16.05.06)

EPP Resolution presented by DR (Cyprus)

EPP Congress, Rome, 30-31 March 2006

The European People's Party:

1. Affirms its support to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus;
2. Whilst respecting the democratic will of the Greek Cypriot community, regrets that a solution has not been yet reached;
3. Calls on the Secretary General of the UN to resume his initiative for reaching a solution acceptable by all communities in Cyprus;

4. Calls on the European Union to get more actively involved in the international endeavours to solve the Cyprus problem;
5. Calls on the Turkish authorities to maintain their constructive attitude in finding a settlement of the Cyprus question leading to an equitable solution, based on the relevant UN Resolutions and on the principles upon which the EU is founded;
6. Calls on the Turkish authorities to effect an early withdrawal, pursuant to the relevant UN resolutions, of its forces in accordance with a specific timetable; believes that such a withdrawal of Turkish forces is a necessary step forward on the way to further easing tension and preparing for a lasting solution;
7. Calls on the Turkish authorities to fully ratify and implement the protocol extending its custom union with all 25 EU members;
8. Calls on the Turkish authorities to recognise the Republic of Cyprus; calls the attention of the Turkish authorities to the fact that the negotiations concerned are intergovernmental negotiations between Turkey on the one hand and the 25 members of the EU on the other; the Republic of Cyprus is one of those Member States.
9. Supports all efforts for financial and trade assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community provided that any measures to be taken in this respect be in line with international law.