



Committee on Petitions

21.11.2018

MISSION REPORT

following the fact-finding visit to Famagusta-Cyprus, 7-8 May 2018

Committee on Petitions

Members of the mission:

Cecilia Wikström	(ALDE) (Leader of the mission)
Alberto Cirio	(PPE)
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut	(PPE)
Sofia Sakorafa	(GUE/NGL)
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Introduction

The Committee on Petitions conducted a fact-finding visit to Famagusta, Cyprus, on 7-8 May 2018. The purpose of the mission, which was led by the Committee Chair Cecilia Wikström, was to reassess and update its information on the situation in Famagusta, and in particular the sealed-off section of the city called Varosha, in the context of Petition 733/2004 submitted by Loizos Afxentiou, on behalf of the Famagusta Refugee Movement, 10 years after the Committee's previous fact-finding visit, which took place on 25-28 November 2007.

On Monday, May the 7th, the Delegation had meetings with the petitioner, two bi-communal civil society organizations, and the Mayor and members of the Famagusta Municipal Council, at the EU House in Nicosia, followed by a working dinner hosted by the President of the House of Representatives, Mr. Demetris Syllouris, with the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nicos Christodoulides, and the Mayor of Famagusta, Mr. Alexis Galanos.

On Tuesday, May the 8th, the Delegation had a meeting with Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of Mission, United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), and then proceeded to visit Famagusta and view the sealed-off city section from accessible locations, including the street opposite the petitioner's home and a part of the Famagusta beach. A press conference with the Mayor of Famagusta, Mr. Alexis Galanos, took place later in the day at the cultural centre of Famagusta Municipality in Deryneia and concluded the official part of the programme.

Historical context and international law

In the aftermath of the coup d'état orchestrated by the Greek military junta against Archbishop Makarios on 15 July 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus on 20 July 1974. Famagusta was captured during the second phase of the Turkish invasion in August 1974, as its inhabitants fled before the advancing Turkish troops. An extensive section of the city, an area of about 6.5 square Kilometres largely corresponding to Varosha, which was predominantly inhabited by Greek Cypriots, was then declared a "Forbidden Zone", was sealed-off and entrance to it was strictly prohibited to all but authorised Turkish military personnel. In the following two years it was systematically looted by the Turkish army. Most of the plundered goods were taken to Turkey where they were sold at auction, while some were distributed to illegal settlers brought to the island from Turkey.

The return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants under UN administration was envisaged by the 1979 High Level Agreement, the UN Security Council Resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992), the Committee on Petitions Report of 17 July 2008, the European Parliament Declaration of 14 February 2012, and the latest European Parliament Resolution of 6 July 2017.

The continued occupation of 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, including Varosha, by the Turkish occupation forces constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and fundamental human rights of EU citizens by Turkey and its illegal, subordinate administration in the occupied territories.

Following the accession of Cyprus to the EU on 1 May 2004, the Commission, three Council Presidencies and US Vice-President Biden were unsuccessfully involved in attempts to reach "package deals" that included the return of Varosha to its former inhabitants under UN administration explicitly (LU, FI) or implicitly (BE) in exchange for other elements.

Developments since the previous fact-finding visit on 25-28 November 2007

In 2010 the then President of the Republic of Cyprus Mr. Christofias submitted, albeit unsuccessfully, a proposal which included the return of Varosha.

When Mr. Anastasiades was elected president in 2013 he proposed a package of confidence-building measures that included the return of Varosha. In 2015 substantial negotiations on a comprehensive settlement started in earnest and made unprecedented progress in most of the six negotiating chapters, culminating in the opening of the Conference on Cyprus in Geneva on 11 January 2017, only a few days after UN Secretary-General António Guterres took office.

Unfortunately, the Conference on Cyprus was closed without an agreement being reached in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, on 7 July 2017, mainly due to Turkey's intransigence on the issue of security and guarantees.

The resumption of Cyprus settlement talks remains uncertain since the recent offshore gas exploration crisis has linked this matter to the prospects of a resumed settlement process. The community leaders did not overcome the impasse in a social event hosted by Ms. Spehar on 16 April 2018. In July 2018 the UN Secretary-General appointed Ms. Jane Holl Lute as personal envoy to understand at which point all parties are in their reflections following Crans-Montana.

Petition

Petition 733/2004 submitted by Loizos Afxentiou, on behalf of the Famagusta Refugee Movement representing over 30,000 European citizens, refugees from Famagusta since August 1974, and their descendants, to the Committee on Petitions in July 2004.

The petition called for the incorporation of the return of the sealed-off section of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants in the comprehensive measures proposed by the European Commission to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community.

In conjunction with the return of the sealed-off section of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants, the petition also envisaged the renovation and operational modernization of the Famagusta harbour. Upon completion of the renovation works, the operation of the port could be undertaken by a Port Authority, a private enterprise, with equal, bi-communal ownership.

The petition pointed out that the return of the sealed-off section of Famagusta to its lawful residents would not entail the need for the relocation of population in the occupied areas, since this section of the city remains uninhabited since its occupation by Turkish military forces in August 1974.

The declared objective of the petition was a city where the two communities of the island are effectively cooperating, in a climate of security and reciprocal respect, to reach a level of peaceful co-existence and prosperity that most Cypriots would want to share, within a reunited, bi-communal, bi-zonal, federal Cypriot state.

N.B. It is important to note here that on 27 February 2006 Council adopted Regulation (EC) No 389/2006 establishing an instrument of financial support for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community. On the other hand, it should be noted that Varosha remain sealed-off by Turkey, as stated in relevant UNSC documents. The Turkish military occupation extends to an area corresponding to 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, Varosha remains to this day the only unaccessible and sealed-off area in the occupied part of Cyprus, under the direct control of the Turkish army.

Under this Regulation, between 2006 and 2016 a total amount of EUR 449 million has been programmed. From 2014 to 2020, under the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), EUR 30 million per year is foreseen.

Summary account of meetings

Preamble

All the meetings were opened by the Chair, who always started by introducing the members of the Delegation, stating the mission objectives and asking the different actors what concrete action they would like to see undertaken in order to advance the objective of the petition.

The Chair concluded all meetings by thanking participants, committing to keep the petition open and the flame burning, without making any promises but by stressing the fact that politicians cannot, and should not, ever give up and that, however difficult it may seem in the present context, a solution to the human tragedy of Varosha must be, and will be found.

Briefings by Mr. Ierotheos Papadopoulos, Head of the EC Representation in Cyprus, and Mr. Andreas Kettis, Head of the EP Liaison Office in Cyprus

Mr. Kettis and Mr Papadopoulos welcomed the Delegation and provided a briefing focusing mainly on the following aspects:

- The history of the invasion and the capture of Famagusta in August 1974;
- The package of confidence-building measures, that included the return of Varosha, proposed by President Anastasiades upon his election in 2013 and the Turkish Cypriot counterproposal;
- The unsuccessful attempt at mediation by US Vice-President Biden, which included a proposal to allow a group of international experts to enter Varosha and report on immediate reconstruction needs, when he visited the island on 21-22 May 2014;
- The unprecedented progress in negotiations made by the two leaders Anastasiades and Akinci between May 2015 and July 2017;
- The closing of the Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana on 7 July 2017, due mainly to the lack of agreement on the chapter of security and guarantees, which is the only external aspect of the Cyprus problem because it involves the guarantor powers of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee and the Treaty of Alliance;
- The different perceptions by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leader and community on the feasibility of a federal solution;
- The recent offshore gas exploration crisis involving the blocking by Turkish naval forces of drilling operations by the ENI vessel within the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone;
- Mr. Erdogan's aggressive rhetoric in the run up to the snap Presidential and Parliamentary Turkish elections on the 24th of June.

At the end of the briefing the Chair made some announcements concerning security, communication and other aspects of the scheduled visit to Famagusta the next day.

In his replies to questions by Members, Mr. Kettis also briefly referred to the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights against Turkey on the property issue, which also resulted in compensation being paid at least in one case.

Meeting with the petitioner

Mr. Loizos Afxentiou came to meet the Delegation with his son Andreas who at 18 is enlisted

in the Cyprus National Guard, serving a mandatory term of 14 months.

The petitioner recounted how on the evening of 14 August 1974 his family fled Famagusta. They thought that they would only be gone for the night and that they would be able to return home the next day. It has been almost 44 years and he still yearns to return home.

He then explained how, after Famagusta was captured, a large part of the city was sealed-off, declared a military area and systematically looted by the Turkish army, and how it remains sealed-off, abandoned to the elements, under the direct control of the Turkish armed forces and the Turkish government, a monument to the cruel irrationality of Turkish occupation. His house lies just behind the fence within the sealed-off section, looted and empty, but still beckoning, as anyone's home does.

Life changed dramatically from the day he fled Famagusta, as his family coped with being refugees in their own country. The generation that actually established Famagusta as the vibrant, cosmopolitan hub that was until 1974 is inexorably slipping away, left with cherished memories, the scars of refugees and the unredeemed desire to return home, if only as the place of their final rest.

The petitioner informed the Delegation that, after the outcome of the then latest attempt to resolve the Cyprus problem in April 2004, and in view of Cyprus' accession to the European Union, he prepared the petition which he put in the hands of the just elected president of the European Parliament Josep Borrell Fontelles on 20 July 2004. Along with 24 other Famagustians he traveled to the European Parliament and also staged a one-day demonstration arguing for Cyprus reunification and for the return of the sealed-off section of Famagusta to its rightful inhabitants as a first step towards this goal. He reiterated his determination to return home to Famagusta and added that his family discussed the prospect and agreed that they would return the minute it becomes possible.

Andreas, the petitioner's son, described how both he and his older brother consider Famagusta to be their hometown even if they were born and raised in a different city in Cyprus. He has come to know Famagusta through his parents and grandparents and from his visits to his city and the family home just behind the fence.

Andreas was asked whether he had any Turkish Cypriot friends, and what other Greek Cypriots of his age thought of Turkish Cypriots. Andreas replied that he met Turkish Cypriots through his father and he considered them to be Cypriot as well, but unfortunately, he did not have the opportunity to have Turkish Cypriot friends in the free areas of Cyprus. He has friends who attend a private school in Nicosia (the English School) where Turkish Cypriots also attend, and they said that they had no problems with Turkish Cypriots.

In his concluding remarks, the petitioner expected the Committee on Petitions to report on the current conditions of occupation of Famagusta, reaffirming the findings of the previous fact-finding mission and its 2008 Report, since nothing has changed over the past 10 years, except that all Cypriot refugees, and Famagusta refugees among them, are still deprived of the life they would be leading had they been free to be in Famagusta and had Cyprus been free from occupation. He then went on to say that the international community has been reacting to policies and/or actions by states (other than Turkey) which threaten international peace, or violate human rights or basic freedoms, by imposing sanctions as a means to bring them back in line with international law. He asked that the Petitions Committee call on Turkey to set a specific date by which it would relinquish control of the Famagusta sealed-off section to its rightful inhabitants and that, prior to this date, it would allow experts, including Greek- and Turkish Cypriots, to enter the sealed-off section in order to assess its condition and prepare a

report on what would be required for its revival. If the government of Turkey would not acquiesce to this call, then the European Union must call for sanctions to be imposed on Turkey, until such time it respects international law and ceases to violate the human rights and basic freedoms of European citizens.

Meeting with representatives of bi-communal civil society organizations

Ms. Yiota Afxentiou and Mr. Serdar Atai, representing respectively the bi-communal organizations “Famagusta Our City” and “Famagusta Initiative” made the following points:

- They firmly believe that the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants can be implemented independently from an overall solution;
- Such a move would constitute a formidable confidence-building measure;
- The citizens of Famagusta are in this situation because of political agendas which are destroying the links between the two communities;
- Call for EU action to achieve the return of Varosha;
- The rehabilitation of the port of Famagusta and its operation under EU supervision would accompany the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants;
- Unfortunately Turkey is using Varosha as a bargaining chip;
- The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot grassroots organization joined forces in 2012 and in April 2014, for the first time, held a joint Good Friday celebration attended by 5.000 people belonging to both communities;
- The on-going organization of such joint events is very useful for promoting reconciliation of the two communities.

The Delegation then heard a very emotional appeal by a lady called Tonia, and her mother Cleopatra, who deplored the loss of their treasures, which were sold at auction by the Turkish occupation army, but demanded at least to recover their memories.

Meeting with the Mayor of Famagusta, Mr. Alexis Galanos, and leaders of the political groups in the Municipal Council of Famagusta

Mr. Galanos made the following points:

- Famagusta is a human tragedy problem and a humanitarian issue, not a negotiating one; in this regard he rejected its use by Turkey as a bargaining chip;
- Recalled UN Security Council Resolutions 550 and 789;
- The return of Varosha would constitute a formidable confidence-building measure;
- Confirmed the wish of the Municipal Council of Famagusta to re-unite with the Turkish Cypriot community and build together the Federal Republic of Cyprus;
- Called on the Delegation to re-state its previous resolutions, stand firm on the European principles and reject the game of blackmail played by Turkey.

Working dinner by H.E the President of the House of Representatives, Mr. Demetris Syllouris

Mr. Syllouris welcomed the Delegation and the new fact-finding visit, 10 years after the previous one, and expressed his appreciation of the European Parliament’s continued support

of the Cypriot people's struggle for justice. The Committee on Petitions, he said, plays a crucial role in connecting citizens with the EU institutions and bridging the democratic deficit of the Union. Despite the fact that the Committee's decisions are not binding, he expected an expression of concrete solidarity and the exertion of increased pressure on Turkey, from the EU and its institutions, for its full compliance with its obligations as a candidate country and for it to abandon its intransigent attitude and expansionist policy. Any solution to the Cyprus problem, he said, must abide by the UN Security Council resolutions and decisions, and be fully compatible with European values and principles, the *acquis communautaire*, international law and the respect of human rights. In this context, he recalled Resolutions 550 and 789 of the UN Security Council and the ongoing efforts of the House of Representatives, including its own resolutions, for the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants, which is a key element for the solution of the Cyprus problem. As a confidence-building measure, it could become the catalyst for a comprehensive settlement, by creating conditions of cooperation, mutual respect and trust between the two communities in Cyprus. He confirmed the commitment of the Greek Cypriot side to a comprehensive, fair and sustainable solution to the Cyprus problem. Finally, he expressed his hope that the occupation army might for once drop its intransigent and provocative stance and allow the Delegation, even at the last minute, to enter the sealed-off section of Famagusta and see with its own eyes the consequences of the Turkish invasion.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nicos Christodoulides, for his part, welcomed the Committee on Petitions fact-finding mission to occupied Famagusta. He gave particular importance to this mission, because it is conducted by the European Parliament, the only institution of the EU which is directly elected by the citizens of the EU Member States. At the same time, the PETI visit takes place at a very particular moment, he said, since we are witnessing an attempt by the UN Secretary-General to re-start the talks, after the last, failed attempt at Crans-Montana when, for the first time since the commencements of negotiations in 1976, we were so close to reaching an agreement. The Cyprus problem is a European problem, and he welcomed the engagement of the EU institutions in the attempt of reaching a solution which will not depart from the EU values and principles, and which will be compatible with the *acquis communautaire*. The importance of the return of the sealed-off section of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants, which can act as a catalyst for the attempts of reaching a solution to the Cyprus problem, is envisaged in very clear terms by the resolutions of the UN Security Council and those of the European Parliament. Therefore, it is particularly important to maintain the issue of the return of the sealed-off section of Varosha on the agenda and in the attention of the media, because it represents also a flagrant violation of human rights. This is exactly one of the main achievements of the PETI visit, he said. Following this visit and the adoption of the mission report, the President of the European Parliament could bring the issue of the sealed-off section of Varosha to the attention of the European Council, in the context of an upcoming session. As regards the crossing point of Deryneia, which leads to the sealed-off city, he confirmed that the relevant procedures for its opening are at an advanced stage, and he hoped that it will be opened by the 1st of July 2018, as agreed. It will be a very positive development which will also reinforce the demands with regard to the return of Varosha.

Meeting with Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of Mission, United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

Ms. Spehar extended a very warm welcome to the Delegation, and proceeded with a briefing

on the current situation on the island, the role of the UN here and the state of play since Crans-Montana:

- Unprecedented progress in many of the negotiating chapters was achieved between May 2015 (election of Mr. Akinci) and July 2017; the two most difficult negotiating chapters (out of the six) were tackled towards the end: on territory a breakthrough was achieved, and that left security and guarantees;
- This prompted the opening of the Conference on Cyprus in January 2017, which continued in Crans-Montana in June-July, with a “package approach” and the need for agreement across chapters; the newly-elected UN Secretary-General took a very active role in the final negotiating round and produced the Guterres framework;
- Ms. Spehar referred to the Guterres framework as one of the biggest achievements and “the legacy” of Crans-Montana, which should not be wasted as it could be a key for a future renewal of the process;
- Since the closing of the Conference on Cyprus on 7 July 2017 there have been no negotiations and the distrust between the parties has deepened;
- The UN Secretary-General’s Good Offices remain available within the UNSC mandate, but the UN needs the will of all the parties to return to the negotiating table, with a common vision of where they are going and how they are going to get there;
- This will only happen when the parties, and in particular the two leaders (it is a leaders-led process) feel that it is possible to return to meaningful and results-oriented negotiations;
- The informal dinner with the two leaders hosted by Ms. Spehar on 16 April 2018 was cordial but inconclusive;
- There is a need for a more structured and formal process to find out where all the parties stand; for this purpose, the Secretary-General is currently choosing a temporary envoy¹ to have consultations in the near future with all the parties in order to find out the outcome of their reflections since the Conference on Cyprus closed;
- Varosha has always been a centrepiece of the major issues within the Cyprus problem that would need to be resolved, and has often been the object of creativity, with at different points of time different countries, different entities, the UN itself, trying to see whether the resolution of the issue of the fenced-off area of Varosha could be a kind of confidence-building measure, whether it could perhaps provide a breakthrough to a comprehensive settlement;

¹ In July 2018 the Secretary-General appointed Ms. Jane Holl Lute to this position.

- Unfortunately, this has never proven possible over the years, as the various Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot proposals in this regard have never been compatible.

The UNFICYP military officer provided additional information on the situation of Varosha, including a slides presentation:

- The southern boundary of Varosha is disputed, UNFICYP had established six observation posts within Varosha, two of which are still manned today, in order to maintain the military status quo of the fenced area of Varosha;
- The UN position is that since 1974 the responsibility of maintaining the status quo within the fenced area of Varosha lies with the Turkish forces and ultimately with the government of Turkey;
- UNFICYP activities in Varosha are restricted, its access possible only through the Turkish forces check-point in the north, UN mobile patrols are allowed with restrictions imposed on them, such as no stopping, speed limits and the use of a specific route.

Ms. Spehar gave the following replies to questions by Members:

- On the Guterres framework: it is supposed to be confidential and media reports have only created confusion. However, it will be discussed and clarified in the forthcoming consultations with the parties;
- On the boundaries of Varosha: there has never been an agreement between the UN and the belligerent forces on the exact cease-fire lines, as there was a ceasefire in 1974 but there was never a cease-fire agreement;
- On the UN promoting the idea of having a group of experts to be granted access to Varosha in order to evaluate the needs for reconstruction: this is one of the ideas among the many confidence-building measures that have been circulating around the years. US Vice-President Biden during his May 2014 visit floated an idea similar to this one but unfortunately it didn't bear fruit, and none of these creative ideas have been accepted to this day;
- On the opening of the Deryneia and Lefka crossing points: the UN would welcome the implementation of this confidence-building measure which was mutually agreed by the sides and would be beneficial to both communities;
- On the role of Mr. Erdogan: the Turkish government is a key party to these talks when it comes to security and guarantees, and the Secretary-General meets Turkey, as he meets many other key member states, on a regular basis. When he does meet Mr. Erdogan, Cyprus tends to be one of the topics, but it is not the only topic.

Visit to Famagusta

After the meeting with Ms. Spehar, the Delegation picked up the petitioner on the way and travelled by bus to Famagusta, in order to view the sealed-off city section from accessible locations. During the journey, both the petitioner and Ms. Attalides of the EPLO in Cyprus provided valuable insights to the Delegation on the rich history of Famagusta.

The entry into the occupied territories through the Strovilia crossing point was uneventful.

From the moment the Delegation bus crossed into the occupied territories it was shadowed by representatives of the illegal subordinate administration (“Foreign Ministry officials” and “Police”) as well as by members of the Turkish ultranationalist organization known as the “Grey Wolves”.

The Delegation made a tour alongside the sealed-off city section, including one stop to view the house of the petitioner (just behind the fence), who made a short presentation to the Delegation members, who were able to witness the state of European refugees’ homes: looted and abandoned to the elements, behind a fence with repeated signs informing all that the enclosed is a “Military Area” and that taking photographs or videos is prohibited. From the petitioner’s home, the Delegation walked to his parish 16th century church of Ayia Zoni, barely visible behind rusty old oil-barrels filled with concrete, with its cross broken-off but with its beautifully carved belfry still a testament to its centuries’ old splendor.

The Delegation decided to make an unscheduled detour to the only entry point to Varosha, guarded by the Turkish forces, where the Chair stepped off the bus, walked up to the check-point and demanded to see the Turkish commander, reportedly called Ali, in order to demand access for the Delegation to the closed city. The Chair was told to wait for the Turkish commander to come meet her at the gate, she saw him start walking towards her, but then he seemed to receive a phone call, turned his back to her and walked away. Consequently, the Delegation was not permitted to enter Varosha.

Visit to accessible parts of Famagusta beach, from which the waterfront of the sealed-off section of Varosha can be viewed but not photographed as it is considered a “military zone”.

The Delegation then proceeded to visit Famagusta beach, where the “Grey Wolves” had hung Turkish flags, and in a very disturbing manner tried to approach the members of the Delegation, in particular the Chair.

The Chair, and to a lesser extent the other members of the Delegation, was immediately approached by a crowd of about 150 Famagustians (mainly Greek Cypriots), crying out their wish, many of them in desperation and tears, to return to their homes, and flanked within close distance by about 20 “Grey Wolves”, waving Turkish and “TRNC” flags and making the characteristic sign of their organization with the right hand.

As had been anticipated, security conditions during this particular visit, which lasted approximately 30 minutes, were far from ideal, as the atmosphere was very tense. In this regard, it is far from certain that the members of the “police” who were present on the beach would have intervened in case of any incident, and if so to what extent, as the “Grey Wolves” are known to enjoy total impunity for their crimes and have never been prosecuted.

Press conference with the Mayor of Famagusta, Mr. Alexis Galanos, at the cultural centre of Famagusta Municipality in Deryneia

After the visit to Famagusta beach, the Delegation crossed back to the areas under the effective control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus through the same crossing point of

Strovilia and proceeded to the scheduled press conference in Deryneia.

A crowd of around 300 Famagustians, brought by chartered buses from Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca, gave a very emotional welcome to the Delegation before the beginning of the press conference.

“Sympathy over Varosha cannot mask the painful truth”, as reported by local media.

The Chair made the following statement:

EXTRACTS:

“44 years have passed (since the Turkish invasion) and the international community (UN, EU, etc.) did what it could, Cyprus has acceded to the EU, and we are here today to follow up on the petition and on our previous visit in 2007. It is a very sensitive moment for Cyprus and for Europe, time is running out with the passing of generations and the two communities are forgetting how to live together. I cannot give you any hope that this visit is going to solve the conflict and the situation, no hope at all, but what I can promise you is that this Committee is taking the situation very seriously and trying to examine any possible minor step forward that can be taken. So, we are using political skills and enormous creativity in that process. We reiterate our profound belief, last stated in our resolution of July 2017, that the return of Famagusta could be a very good point of departure towards the full reunification of the island, but the Commission and the Council are a little hesitant on that. Of course, it is about the fundamental values and principles on which the EU is based. It was difficult to explain to these very desperate people we met during our visit that the only thing that we can do is to listen and voice your claims, to keep the flame burning, you are not left alone, we are standing by you on this, together with my colleagues today, all of them, today we are not only Europeans, we are all Famagustians, all of us”.

The Mayor of Famagusta, Mr. Alexis Galanos, said that Famagusta is “not just a confidence-building measure. It’s much bigger than that. It is a humanitarian problem for Europe.”

The Turkish Cypriot media were also invited to the press conference, but it seems that none were present.

Conclusions and possible way forward

- Despite very emotional meetings with the petitioner, his son and other Varosha refugees who demanded concrete action from the PETI Delegation, it is difficult to envisage, in the current political context, that a package of confidence-building measures that include the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants is possible outside an agreement on a comprehensive settlement; however, a significant, concrete confidence-building measure such as the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants, with the prospect of Greek- and Turkish Cypriot peaceful co-existence it entails, could be the only means to spur ahead efforts towards reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue;
- All previous attempts by three EU Council Presidencies in 2005, 2006 and 2010, as well as US Vice-President’s Biden Master Plan for Famagusta in May 2014, to reach “package deals” that included the return of Varosha to its former inhabitants under UN administration in exchange of other elements have so far failed; The proposals submitted by Greek Cypriot leaders regarding the return of Varosha have also proven unsuccessful;
- It is clear that Turkey sees Varosha as one of the main bargaining chips for the territorial adjustment endgame of settlement talks;

- Both the Commission and the UN are of the view that a comprehensive settlement, reached by an agreement between the leaders of the two communities, constitutes the most efficient way to solving the problems related to the Cyprus issue, including the return of Varosha to its lawful inhabitants;
- However, the need for such a solution is both urgent and critical: the PETI report 10 years ago had already warned of the danger that time is running out because of the fact that, on both sides of the island, people are forgetting how to live together and to speak each other's language; generations are growing up and many of those who remember Cyprus before 1974 have already passed away;
- It is also clear that Turkey holds the European Parliament resolutions in total disregard;
- Therefore, it is a matter of enforcement of existing UN Security Council resolutions, which is the only supra-national organization which can exert real pressure on Turkey: UNSC Resolution 550 (1984) in its paragraph 5 expressly "calls for the transfer of this area (Varosha) to the administration of the United Nations"; UNSC Resolution 789 (1992) in its paragraph 8 (c) calls, again, "for the area at present under the control of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus be extended to include Varosha".

Recommendations

1. Calls on the European Commission, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Council and all EU Member States to table a new resolution in the UN Security Council calling for political and economic sanctions against Turkey for its acts of aggression in the eastern Mediterranean and for its non-compliance with Resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992) of the UN Security Council.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	21.11.2018
Result of final vote	+: 26 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Margrete Auken, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Andrea Cozzolino, Pál Csáky, Miriam Dalli, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut Eleonora Evi, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Peter Jahr, Rikke-Louise Karlsson, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Lukas Mandl, Notis Marias, Ana Miranda, Miroslavs Mitrofanovs, Marlene Mizzi, Gabriele Preuß, Eleni Theocharous, Cecilia Wikström.
Substitutes present for the final vote	Urszula Krupa, Kostadinka Kuneva, Julia Pitera, Ángela Vallina
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Asim Ademov, Adam Szejnfeld, Mihai Țurcanu

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

26	+
ALDE	Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Cecilia Wikström
ECR	Urszula Krupa, Notis Marias, Eleni Theocharous
EFDD	Eleonora Evi
GUE/NGL	Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Kostadinka Kuneva, Ángela Vallina
NI	Rikke-Louise Karlsson
PPE	Asim Ademov, Pál Csáky, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Peter Jahr, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Lukas Mandl, Julia Pitera, Adam Szejnfeld, Mihai Țurcanu
S&D	Andrea Cozzolino, Miriam Dalli, Marlene Mizzi, Gabriele Preuß,
VERST/ALE	Margrete Auken, Ana Miranda, Mirosłavs Mitrofanovs

0	-

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

Annex

Meeting at EU House



Petitioner with son at EU House



Meeting with Ms. Spehar at UNFICYP Headquarters



Meeting with Ms. Spehar at UNFICYP Headquarters (2)



Petitioner's home



Left my soul inside, open up!



Fenced-off city section



Fenced-off city section (2)



Press conference

