

# Where do the Greek Cypriot policies lead to ?

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**The Greek Cypriot minister of foreign affairs, Erato Kozakou-Marcoulli returned only recently from her visit to Kyrgyzstan when another Greek Cypriot official, the honorary president of socialist political party EDEK Vassos Lyssarides started preparing for a trip, this time to Damascus.**

According to press reports, Marcoulli might follow him. A reason for the Greek Cypriot regional diplomatic traffic is the same as in many other cases : The Greek Cypriot officials usually go to those countries that have had a kind of contact with the Turkish Cypriots just prior to their visit - or if they are likely to visit soon. The situation is not much different now.

The Greek Cypriots have feared that there might be a possibility of direct flights between Kyrgyzstan and the Turkish Cypriot airport of Ercan. And Syria has already started operating jointly a regular ferry service between Syrian city of Latakia and northern Cyprus' Famagusta.

It is unfortunate that almost all of Greek Cypriot politics are dictated by their efforts to keep the Turkish Cypriots isolated from the rest of the world. It is a real pity that the whole Greek Cypriot political engagement in the Cyprus problem boils down to issuing diplomatic protests whenever a Turkish Cypriot finds a platform to express views. All of this is more pitiable as the "official" Greek Cypriot position is that of reunification of the island based on equal footing between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. However, does anyone believe them any longer ? They continue to give the impression that they have had an inherent right to talk and to decide on behalf of Turkish Cypriots. It is enough to read their own - still valid but dysfunctional since 1963 - constitution (a must read for those who would like to learn more about the Cyprus conflict ; it can be found on the official internet Web site of the Greek-Cypriot-run Republic of Cyprus) to realize that it has never been so.

## **Greek Cypriots employ siege tactic**

Their actual approach to the Turkish Cypriots resembles more a siege tactic used against an enemy civil population during times prior to the invention of the international humanitarian law than a move toward a constitutional partner with a vision of rapprochement. An insistent blocking of any move possibly leading to the lifting of the Turkish Cypriots' economic isolation (including blocking the EC's Direct Trade Regulation) is also closer to a strategy of "starving a besieged city out" than to a sincere readiness to negotiate a settlement based on power-sharing and political equality.

But life goes on, as Emine Erk, Chairperson of the Turkish Cypriots Human Rights Foundation, pointed out when we visited her with a group of researchers last week. The global problems, whether ecological or those of human trafficking - the island of Cyprus is widely considered as one of the world's centers for human trafficking - need an immediate response, she added. Due to the misleading information campaign by the Greek Cypriots, not even Greenpeace and Amnesty International have any contacts with civic organizations in northern Cyprus (only because they are based in the northern Cyprus) which obviously not only has a negative impact merely on the Turkish Cypriots. Who is profiting from the Greek Cypriot Ministry of Education's (both unconstitutional and illogical) claim to be in charge of the Turkish Cypriot education but at the same time blocking the universities of the northern Cyprus (their number is currently six) to enter the Bologna process, creates yet another puzzle.

## **New realities emerging**

Still, while being totally up to their necks in the effort to keep the Turkish Cypriots isolated from the rest of the world, the Greek Cypriot administration seems to fail to see at least some of the realities.

The ferry between Syria and northern Cyprus is running, and according to *Politis* newspaper, the EU Commissioner Olli Rehn's office doesn't see anything legally wrong with that. The port of Famagusta is not illegal under international law and designating it as "illegal" was a unilateral decision of the Greek Cypriot government. Moreover, provided the isolation imposing policies of the Greek Cypriots continue, the Turkish Cypriots are likely to reconsider their position towards reunification that they voiced in the 2004 referenda, Erdil Nami, Head of the Turkish Chamber of Commerce told us during the meeting with our study group. As a result, it looks as if it might be increasingly difficult for the Greek Cypriot administration to send a "protest envoy" to other countries. Not because they wouldn't be able to handle a task professionally but simply because they wouldn't have enough people to do so.

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### **Sources**

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