

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to take part at this meeting on Cyprus organized by TEPAV, together with my dear friend Andros Kyprianou. Initiatives like this I believe will contribute for better understanding between the parties of the Cyprus issue. For that, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the organisers.

Dear guests,

We are all aware that the Cyprus problem has reached a level of maturity. This conviction has led the UN Secretary General to recently report that "the period of endless negotiations are now behind us". As Mr. Guterres frequently states, "the essence of a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem is practically there". What's needed now, is the strongest of political will, courage and mutual faith to walk the last and most difficult "mile", and conclude the process for the greater good of both Cypriot communities and East Mediterranean.

For any peace building process to be successful and viable, a forward-looking approach is required towards the common target where all parties can emerge as winners. In the case of Cyprus this common target is bi-zonal, bi-communal federation based on political equality. It is my firm belief that, for a process of such complexity and political sensitivity to be successful, a package approach on the 6-point "Guterres Framework" outlining the main pending issues certainly constitutes such basis. A strategic and structured agreement must be reached on these key outstanding issues, which would form the frame of the comprehensive political settlement.

Dear guests,

In order to understand what drew UN Secretary General to come to the conclusion that the time for open-ended negotiations has come to an end, we need to understand what has been tried, what has failed and what has been achieved so far.

The fact that the International Cyprus Conference was convened in Crans Montana last year is evidence that sufficient progress had been achieved by the two leaders to decide that what was needed to conclude the negotiations was to go for a final round of "give & take" across all chapters. This naturally would

include the Security and Guarantees Chapter and thereby sitting together with the Guarantor Powers, allowing for a conclusive resolution of all issues across all chapters and create the new comprehensive settlement plan.

In fact this is exactly what happened. Prior to the convening of the Conference in Crans Montana the two sides managed to narrow down their differences to bridgeable distances on all 5 issues being governance and power sharing, property, territorial adjustments, economy and EU matters.

Once the Conference started, however the sides failed to make further progress. Each side expected the other to open their hand further first. Witnessing the stalemate there, the UN Secretary General took the initiative to prepare a package deal, what is now known as the Gutteres Framework, with the aim of finalizing a deal on the final day of the Conference.

In my conviction, the Greek Cypriot leader's refusal to submit his final offers on 5 of the 6 items included in the Guterres Framework while demanding that the Turkish side gives *in writing* their final position on the 6th item i.e Security and Guarantees became too big an obstacle to overcome and the Conference collapsed. I am aware that Mr.Anastasiades has another version but the European Union which was at the table as an observer, and above all the UN Secretary General himself who witnessed everything, knows very well why he was not allowed to call the Turkish, Greek and British Prime Ministers to join the Conference in order to finalise the deal on Security and Guarantees chapter.

I do however think that our job as politicians is to question why the Greek Cypriot leader felt obliged to act in the way that he did and why it was not possible for him to get what he asked for. I believe we also need to question why Mr.Anastasiadis recently opened the discussion on decentralisation and made comments that would give the feeling that he questions the political equality and effective participation of Turkish Cypriots on the decision making within the federal bodies. I believe the answers to these questions may help us find the way forward and change the unacceptable status quo. When I put these questions I arrive to the following conclusions and the way forward.

Considering all the past efforts and the body of work that has been accumulated, it is simply unreasonable to suggest that there is need for further analysis and further negotiations for example on effective participation in an open ended manner. That's why I wholeheartedly share the view of the UN Secretary General that we can no longer expect support for open ended negotiations. I further note

that the two sides on the island as well as the UN Secretary General are in agreement that the status quo is unacceptable. Putting these two facts together mean that we need a road map which is well defined and not open ended.

So how do we get there? In my view the answer is clear.

1st we need to help UN Secretary General's Special Representative Ms. Lute to draft a new terms of reference for the talks. A structure that defines this final attempt as a result oriented round of talks.

Allow me to explain what I mean by result oriented process:

We have already seen that the Cyprus issue was about to be resolved in a manner of hours at the final night of the Conference in Crans Montana. This shows that we need months not years to wrap it up and prepare the new Comprehensive Settlement document. For this we will need to pick up from where it was left off in Crans Montana. That is to say, respecting all the convergences achieved so far and concentrating our efforts on the remaining issues in line with the Guetteres Framework.

Second, we need to give a reinforced role to the UN, not only to facilitate but also to propose solutions to the remaining unresolved matters. This could be done as already our divergences have been narrowed down.

Third, it is already agreed that the new comprehensive settlement plan will be put to the separate simultaneous referenda of the two communities once it is concluded.

Fourth, the Turkish Cypriots would like to see some clarity and assurance regarding their future, should the Greek Cypriot people rejects the federal agreement once more. I believe the international community needs to consider alternative ways ahead in that case. Such a consideration would signal the Greek Cypriot people and to Greek Cypriot leader that the decision they will make is a definite one. Federation or permanent division.

Dear guests,

The time has come to decide. If we want a federal solution there is a sure way to reach it. To quote the UN Secretary General, what is lacking to cross the finish line is political will. Let's show we have it and we will do it.

Let's reach beyond what we accomplished so far. And when I say "we" I don't only mean Cypriots but all the interested parties. It is essential that especially Turkey and Greece but also other international actors talk to each other and assist Cypriots. The positive outcome of the Cyprus talks is definitely in the interest of Turkey, Greece, EU and East Mediterranean region. There could be some countries in the region who wouldn't like to see the Cyprus problem solved, because they are aware that this will enhance the strength and the role of Turkey in the East Mediterranean. However we are all aware that the stability, economic prosperity and peaceful coexistence can only be sustained with a Cyprus solution in the East Mediterranean.

Only a collective effort can put this conflict behind us, open a new era of cooperation in Eastern Mediterranean at a time such good news are desperately needed.

Therefore I firmly believe in the urgent need to focus all our efforts to settle the longstanding Cyprus conflict. For its people and for the people around it.

Thank you