



CYPRUS CENTER FOR EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

PRESS RELEASE

Round-table discussion organized by the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs

ADDRESSING THE CYPRUS QUESTION: THE WAY FORWARD

On March 18, 2008, the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs held a second, follow-up round-table discussion to re-assess the latest International Crisis Group (ICG) report on Cyprus and discuss the way forward towards a resolution of the Cyprus question. Chaired by Professor Michael Attalides, Rector of the University, the round-table drew a considerable audience of senior foreign diplomats, political figures, academics, journalists and students. The panelists Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Hugh Pope, a Senior ICG analyst and main author of the latest report used the report's findings to set out their own view of the next steps for Cyprus. Professor Andreas Theophanous, the Director of the Center, provided a brief analysis of the current political situation in Cyprus, establishing from the outset that the latest ICG report is much less biased than the previous one.

Mr. Pope paid particular attention to the notion that the Cyprus problem has become a European problem, which he said irritates the Commission as it has become an obstacle for Turkey's European course as well as for EU-NATO relations. He also pointed out that a number of EU member states, which are not in favor of Turkey's accession, might use Cyprus as a scapegoat and hide behind the problem to justify their decisions. Mr. Pope paid particular attention to the international 'euphoria' and optimism created from President Christofias's election

as the latter (and his party, AKEL) has had, traditionally, very good relations with the Turkish Cypriot community. He also argued that a significant number on both sides of the Green Line do not consider the *status quo* to be the worst possible option and this mentality contributes to the existing unwillingness for both sides to make significant compromises. Lastly, Mr. Pope pointed out that there are essentially only three ways forward: (a) perpetuation of the *status quo*, (b) a formal agreement for partition, and (c) a formal agreement for reunification of the island.

Dr. Kozakou-Marcoullis pointed to the successful functioning federations in the world and spoke of the need to focus on the obstacles preventing the emergence of an agreed federal solution, raised herself eighteen core points. Some of those points aimed at reducing the fears of both sides and, *inter alia*, dealt with the withdrawal of the Turkish troops and the complete demilitarization of the island, EU/UN monitoring for the implementation of any agreement, the use of UN-Chapter 7 as an implementation mechanism, and the need for abandonment of Turkey's adamant position on the issue of guarantees. Dr. Marcoullis also focused on the need to create a positive environment, which entails the honest commitment for a bizonal bicomunal federation from both sides' elite and the creation of truth and reconciliation commissions. Lastly, she paid particular attention to the need for 'a Cypriot solution', which would only take into consideration the best interests of the people of Cyprus and not those of third countries and stressed the need to focus on and respect fundamental freedoms.