



Presidents of Cyprus and Greece meet in Athens



Jan. 16 - Presidents of Cyprus and Greece, Demetris Christofias and Karolos Papoulias, met in the Greek capital on Saturday night.

During the 45-minute meeting the two leaders discussed latest developments in the Cyprus problem, bilateral matters and other issues of mutual interest.

Christofias invited Papoulias to pay an official visit to Cyprus. The Greek President accepted the invitation. The visit will be arranged through diplomatic channels.

Source: FAMAGUSTA GAZETTE

Commissioner-designate Androulla Vassiliou underlines her priorities before MEPs

Jan 14 - Multilingualism, training and mobility for teachers and young people, the role of sport and the preservation of cultural diversity were among the issues for which the Cypriot Commissioner-designate for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth Androulla Vassiliou, was questioned by MEPs on Thursday, during her hearing.

"We should make sure that every EU programme we apply has a direct impact on citizens' lives", Vassiliou stressed. Among her key priorities the Commissioner-designate highlighted the importance of strengthening education, increasing mobility opportunities for young people and creating an environment that promotes culture and creativity.

Asked about measures to improve the education of teachers Vassiliou said that "Teacher education is among the most important factors for students' success", stressing that today's rapid technological evolution makes it even more important to invest more in it. She also said that teachers should be encouraged to be more mobile, e.g. by taking part in exchange programmes.

Vassiliou promised to fight for an increase in education and training budgets, but said that she needed MEPs' support for this and added that it was also up to local and regional authorities to invest and better connect to businesses.

Sport is "a vehicle to achieve positive things", such as good health and team spirit, said Vassiliou in reply to questions from MEPs, adding that she will pay attention to all sports, not just football, and that developing sport at grass-roots level will be at the heart of her policies.

Source: CYPRUS NEWS AGENCY

Greece to set up team of experts to help Greek Cypriot side in talks

Jan 18 - President of the Republic of Cyprus Demetris Christofias and Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou decided on Monday that the Greek government would be setting up a team of law experts to assist the Greek Cypriot negotiating team in talks for a solution of the Cyprus problem.

The decision was announced by Papandreou after talks in Athens with President Christofias.

"A team of law experts will be created immediately to help the Cypriot government and its negotiating team with anything it may need," Papandreou said.

President Christofias welcomed the creating of the team, which he said would "give the best possible interpretations to various aspects that need interpreting, so that the positions of the Greek Cypriot side at the talks are validated both legally and politically. "

He also announced that Papandreou has accepted an invitation to visit Cyprus for "a joint evaluation of the Cyprus problem and developments."

Furthermore, Papandreou said he would soon be sending a letter of reply to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, inviting him to visit Greece, and that he would be including thoughts on the Cyprus problem, after Monday's meeting with President Christofias.

Papandreou assured that Greece and the Greek government would continue to support Cyprus actively, in every possible way, and that Cypriot Foreign Minister Marcos Kyprianou and Greek Alternate Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas would be immediately promoting the implementation of the decisions taken on Monday.

"President Christofias has our full faith and support. We support his efforts to reach a just, functional and viable solution in Cyprus, without deadlines or arbitration, a solution based on UN Security Council resolutions and EU principles and values, with the full implementation of the *acquis communautaire*, a solution that will safeguard the functionality of the Cypriot state and its effective participation in the EU, a solution that will result in the termination of the military occupation and the division of the island," Papandreou said, adding that Greece stresses in every direction that "the Cyprus problem is an issue of military occupation and invasion by Turkey."

Referring to Turkish proposals concerning the chapter of governance in talks between the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus for a settlement, Papandreou said he agreed with President Christofias that they are "negative and backward," and pointed out that it was necessary to maintain the agreed basis of the talks for a bizonal bicomunal federation, with political equality, as defined in UN decisions, with a single sovereignty, a single citizenship and a single international identity.

He added that they agreed on the necessity to continue the Cyprus talks for a mutually acceptable agreement.

Papandreou said they also exchanged views on Turkey's EU accession prospects, in the light of December's European Council conclusions.

President Christofias said they discussed developments in the Cyprus problem in depth, as well as relations between the EU and Turkey, noting that they shared common positions.

He added that, during the meeting, they reaffirmed the commitment of Cyprus and Greece for "a solution of a bizonal bicomunal federation, with political equality, as defined in UN resolutions," noting that this was "the historical compromise of the Greek Cypriot community."

President Christofias also welcomed the fact that Papandreou had accepted an invitation to visit Cyprus.

President Christofias furthermore assured that he would continue to defend the fundamental principles of a Cyprus settlement, adding that the Turkish proposals "are unacceptable, we dismiss them and do not accept to discuss them."

Papandreou noted that a solution would be to the benefit of the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots, Greece and Turkey, adding that it was time for Turkey to release the Turkish Cypriot community and contribute constructively towards a solution.

Source: CYPRUS NEWS AGENCY

Orams Cyprus verdict



Jan. 19 - Linda and David Orams will have to demolish their home, built on occupied land in north Cyprus a British court has ruled.

The legal battle, which also affects thousands of holiday home owners in northern Cyprus, was decided today by the Court of Appeal in London.

In a press statement the Orams said the verdict was a "blow to us"

"The result is very disappointing and a blow to us but we will not let it ruin our lives.

We believe that we unwittingly became entangled in an extremely complex political situation, the dispute between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities over property in Cyprus.

We know that the ruling will also be of great concern to the many foreign property-owners in Cyprus.

We will study the Judgment and consider whether there is anything further to be done. Failing that, we will have to take steps, as far as possible given the political situation in Cyprus, to comply with the Judgment.

We continue to believe that only a political settlement can resolve the property issue and we hope that the Judgment will not undermine that process. "

The British Court judgment was issued in the case of Apostolides v Orams, in which Greek Cypriot Meletis Apostolides took the Orams couple to court, claiming his property rights over his property in the occupied areas where the Orams had built, illegally, a holiday home.

The Cypriot court had ordered the Orams to pay compensation to Apostolides, demolish the holiday home they had built in his property in the Turkish occupied village of Lapithos, halt all intervention on the said property and deliver it to its legal owner.

The British Court of Appeal said this ruling must be executed.

Apostolides, in an initial reaction, said he was pleased, adding that today's ruling was "a vindication of the institutions and the values of the European Union." He also noted that the judgment relates to all the aspects of the property issue, one of the main parameters of the question of Cyprus, which has been divided since the 1974 Turkish invasion.

Apostolides' lawyer, Constantinos Kantounas, said the Court of Appeal ruling was "final and there is no right to appeal against it."

Source: FAMAGUSTA GAZETTE

Australian Open: Baghdatis advances to the second round



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Jan 19 - Cypriot tennis player Marcos Baghdatis eased to the Australian Open's second round after a 3-0 (6-2, 6-4, 6-4) victory over Italy's Paolo Lorenzi, 83 in the ATP rankings.

Baghdatis, 31st in the world, will face Spain's 18-seeded David Ferrer on Thursday.

The Cypriot champion competes to the Australian Open after a victory in the ATP tournament Medibank Open last week in Sydney.

In 2006, Marcos reached the Australian Open final where he was defeated by the World's No 1 tennis player Roger Federer.

Source: CYPRUS NEWS AGENCY

Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus continues its efforts

Jan. 18 - Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP)* will intensify its work in 2010 with eight exhumation teams – six in the northern and two in the southern part of Cyprus.

Since inception of its exhumation project in August 2006, the CMP has retrieved skeletal elements which relate to more than 600 persons and identified and returned to their families remains of 196 missing individuals (145 missing Greek Cypriots and 51 missing Turkish Cypriots). The exhumation and identification work of the CMP is guided by scrupulous scientific process and precise rules and is based on the internationally accepted standards and practices. Valuable advice is given by the Argentinean experts of EAAF and the ICRC.

The investigations of the CMP are conducted in the sole interest of the families whose loved ones are missing (article V.1 of its Rules of Procedures) and whose pain and sensitivities must be respected by all. Its mandate is purely humanitarian: to establish the fate of missing persons. The Committee does not attempt to establish the cause of death or attribute responsibility for the death of missing persons (article 11 of its Terms of Reference).

To succeed in its mission CMP needs the help of all concerned and especially those who possess relevant information or are in a position to secure it. The CMP appeals to anyone who has any information on possible burial sites to come forward. The CMP guarantees strict confidentiality of the information and absolute protection of identity. The CMP wants to thank those who have provided information so far.

Today, the families of over 1800 missing Cypriots from both communities are still waiting to learn the fate of their loved ones. Their pain is pain of all Cypriots, their tragedy is tragedy of the entire Cyprus, and all involved must join together to heal the wounds of the past, to do everything possible to bring closure to the families of the missing persons.

The CMP would like to thank all donor countries and especially the European Union and express the hope that this support will continue in the future so that, together with the contributions originating from Cyprus, the work will continue without interruptions or delays.

Source: CYPRUS NEWS AGENCY

European Union President to visit Cyprus

Jan 19 – EU President Herman van Rompuy will visit Cyprus as part of his tour to the capitals of EU countries where he will meet with leaders of EU member states to prepare the informal European Council Summit, on February 11.

Rompuy will arrive in Cyprus on January 21 and will have a working lunch with President Demetris Christofias. Yesterday he visited Romania where he met with the President of the country Traian Basescu and Prime Minister Emil Boc. Today he visited London to have a working breakfast with British PM Gordon Brown.

Source: CYPRUS NEWS AGENCY

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