



Our common multicultural future in Europe via our own cultural heritage 2019-2021



Program for Erasmus+ meeting in Cyprus



1974-2019

CYPRUS STILL OCCUPIED, STILL DIVIDED

In July 1974, Turkey invaded the republic of Cyprus in violation of the UN Charter and the fundamental principles of international law. The consequences of the invasion and subsequent illegal military occupation are still felt today:

- 1) For 45 consecutive years Cyprus and its people remain forcibly and artificially divided.
- 2) Over 36% of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus is still under illegal military occupation by Turkey, with the presence of dozens of thousands of heavily armed Turkish troops.
- 3) 200,000 Greek Cypriots, who were forcibly expelled from the northern part of Cyprus, are still deprived of the right to return to their homes and properties.
- 4) More than half of the missing persons, civilians and soldiers, are still missing, while the Turkish side refuses to cooperate fully in ascertaining their fate.
- 5) Less of 400 Greeks and Maronites, out of 20,000 at the end of August 1974, remain enclaved in their still occupied villages, living under conditions of oppression and deprivation.
- 6) The demographic structure and balance of Cyprus has been altered due to the illegal mass transfer of settlers from Turkey to the occupied areas.
- 7) Priceless religious and archeological treasures – part of the world's cultural heritage- are still in danger while many churches , monuments cemeteries and archeological sites have been destroyed, desecrated or vandalized:
 - a. More than 60,000 cultural objects have been smuggled and illegally sold abroad.
 - b. More than 550 churches and monasteries have been looted, destroyed or desecrated.
 - c. More than 20,000 icons, sacred vessels, gospels and other objects have disappeared.
 - d. Churches have been turned into mosques, museums, places of entertainment, hotels and even barns.

A series of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions reflect the universal condemnation of Turkey's invasion and all subsequent acts of aggression against Cyprus. The resolutions demand, inter alia, :

- The withdrawal of foreign troops.
- The return of refugees to their homes in safety.

- The ascertainment of the fate of missing persons.
- The respect of human rights of all Cypriots.
- The respect to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus.

On May 10th 2001, the European Court of Human Rights found Turkey guilty of continuous violations of human rights in Cyprus.

A new round of negotiations, aiming at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, was initiated in September 2013. On October 2014 the leaders of the two communities adopted a joint declaration which reaffirmed the basis of a settlement, namely a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality.

From May 2015 to June 2017, negotiations proceeded intensively and significant progress was reached on an important number of issues.

The International Conference on Cyprus at Grans Montana (Switzerland July 2017), concluded without result due to Turkey's insistence on maintaining the right to unilaterally intervene in Cyprus. Ever since Turkey openly challenges the UN established parameters and the goal of reunification. Furthermore the Turkish side has escalated its threatening rhetoric and provocative actions in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone.

The Greek Cypriot side remains committed to reunification within the UN-established parameters.

The Green Line of Cyprus

The Green line, or The United Nations Buffer Zone, is the line that divides Cyprus running through the capital city of Nicosia. It stretches West to East for more than 180km and has an area of 346 square km. - See map here showing the United Nations Buffer Zone.

A U.N. peacekeeping force patrols the buffer zone.

