



# SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE REPORT



28 April 2009 No. 6

## CYPRUS

### Expected Council Action

On 30 April, the Council is expected to hold consultations on Cyprus and hear a briefing by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, Alexander Downer, who has been conducting good offices and providing support to talks between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders, Mehmet Ali Talat and Demetris Christofias, since negotiations were renewed on 3 September 2008. The aim of the briefing seems to be to take advantage of Downer's presence in New York to update the Council on progress in the talks. It will be his first briefing to the Council since his appointment in July 2008.

A draft presidential statement expressing support for the talks is under discussion. However, it was unclear at press time whether there would be enough support for Council action.

### Key Recent Developments

The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders have continued to meet regularly and have held talks on a number of issues, including property, governance and EU matters. On 21 April they started to address economic issues, and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun said that there was quite a lot of convergence on EU and economic matters.

The two leaders still have to address the issues of territory and security, after which a second round is expected to start where issues of disagreement will be explored in greater detail.

On 19 April parliamentary elections were held in Northern Cyprus. The opposition National Unity Party led by Dervis Eroglu gained 44 percent of the votes and 26 seats in parliament, while Talat's Republican Party gained only 29 percent of the votes. Eroglu is expected to assume a larger role in the Turkish Cypriot leadership, in a *cohabitation* setting.

On 21 April, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said in a speech to members of his ruling party that it would be "very wrong" for the new Turkish Cypriot government to end the negotiations or continue the negotiations on a different basis than the one that has been followed so far. At a press conference the same day, Turkish President Abdullah Gül emphasised that Talat was representing the Turkish Cypriots in negotiations with Greek Cypriots. This was in response to Eroglu's comments on 19 April that there were other alternatives to reunification. Eroglu however also said that reunification talks would continue,

and that his party would support Talat's role as chief negotiator, but insisted that he would appoint a representative to join Talat in the talks.

Following the results of the elections, Mehmet Ali Talat said that the support of the international community would be necessary to take a final step in the Cyprus negotiations with the goal of achieving a solution by the end of 2009.

On 21 April, Special Representative Zerihoun said that he did not anticipate any problems in the talks as a result of the elections.

On 10 April, Downer stated that the two sides were making good progress on confidence-building measures. A number of such measures had been agreed on for implementation, such as the crossing of ambulances in emergency cases, the entering into force of a committee on communications and liaison for criminal matters and the establishment of an advisory board on the preservation of cultural heritage.

### **Options**

The Council could decide simply to hear Downer's briefing and leave the question of reinforcing the negotiation process until June when it will need to decide on the renewal of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) which expires on 15 June.

Alternatively, and given the new component of uncertainty arising from the recent elections in Northern Cyprus, the Council could use this opportunity and respond to Talat's appeal for support from the international community by adopting a presidential or press statement. Such a statement could:

- commend the two leaders for their efforts;
- urge the two sides to take advantage of the current momentum and continue to engage fully in the discussions;
- express hope that substantive negotiations can take place soon;
- urge that a solution be reached by the end of 2009; and
- request the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General to remain fully engaged and intensify efforts to reach a settlement.

### **Key Issues**

A key issue which may be discussed during consultations is whether the result of the elections in Northern Cyprus will have—or may already have had—an impact on the talks. Talat remains the leader of the Turkish Cypriot delegation. However, it is unclear how much his position will be weakened as a result of losing the parliamentary elections and whether he may be under pressure in a *cohabitation* setting to show less flexibility in the negotiations, despite Eroglu's expressed support for the continuation of the reunification process with the goal of reaching a bi-zonal, bi-communal entity with political equality. Some seem to believe that could positively influence the talks in terms of adding pressure on the leaders to reach an agreement before the next Turkish Cypriot presidential elections in 2010. (Talat said he would not be a candidate if, by then, there is no agreement on Cyprus reunification.)

Another key issue is how much progress is actually being made in the talks and when the second more substantive round of actual negotiations over the really problematic issues would start. There are concerns that the window of opportunity for a settlement may disappear by the

end of 2009 given the April 2010 elections in Northern Cyprus. Therefore a related issue is whether the Council should intensify its concern about the timeline.

### **Council Dynamics**

At press time the P5 were discussing the possibility of a statement. It seemed that the UK was in favour of some Council action. Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots also seemed in favour of a Council statement. However, there appeared to be some reluctance from the Greek Cypriots to have a Council pronouncement at this stage. It remained to be seen whether Russia, who traditionally supports Greek Cypriots in the Council, would therefore support the draft. Overall, a general concern for Council members, including the P5, seems to be whether a Council response would be helpful for the negotiations process.

### **UN Documents**

<b>Latest Security Council Resolution</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• S/RES/1847 (12 December 2008) renewed the mandate of UNFICYP until 15 June 2009, urging the intensification of the momentum of negotiations, preserving the current atmosphere of trust and goodwill, and engaging in the process in a constructive and open manner, and welcoming progress on confidence-building measures.</li></ul>
<b>Latest Presidential Statement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• S/PRST/2008/34 (4 September 2008) confirmed the Council's readiness to support the negotiating process between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and welcomed the appointment of Alexander Downer as the Secretary-General's Special Adviser.</li></ul>
<b>Latest Report by the Secretary-General on Cyprus</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• S/2008/744 (28 November 2008)</li></ul>

### **Other Relevant Facts**

<b>Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus</b>
Alexander Downer (Australia)
<b>Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Head of Mission and Deputy Special Adviser</b>
Tayé-Brook Zerihoun (Ethiopia)

### **Useful Additional Sources**

*Solving the EU-Turkey-Cyprus Triangle*, Analysis and Commentary, International Crisis Group, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5908&l=1>