

# **Greek Turkish Forum**

## **Cyprus Chapter Statement, 17 June 2020**

The Cyprus Chapter of the Greek Turkish Forum welcomes the agreement of 21 May 2020 between the leaders of the two communities on the gradual lifting of restriction measures at crossings. The agreement is important because it marks a return to cooperation.

Any restrictions in crossings found necessary due to the pandemic, are better imposed in cooperation by the two sides, so as to underline their 'temporary and precautionary' nature to avoid setting a precedent and to not provide an occasion for pro-separation forces in both communities to call for permanent restrictions. In this regard, the agreement on stages of reopening was auspicious.

The leaders identified groups of people to be allowed across crossing points as of 8 June 2020. It is noteworthy that the agreement was facilitated through the bicomunal technical committee on health. This promised the exchange of epidemiological data and therefore greater administrative capacity for taking effective action at checkpoints.

Since the 8<sup>th</sup> June deadline lapsed and, regrettably, cooperation has not been yet restored as outlined, we call for the immediate implementation of the agreement.

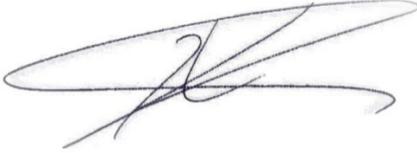
We underline that the palpable risks associated with reopening economies as the world faces a challenge from the coronavirus can better be dealt with through joint efforts. The lifting of restrictions is also essential for efforts to achieve lasting peace and prosperity through person to person contacts between members of the two communities that have abruptly been interrupted with negative consequences. Cooperation will also enhance confidence in the technical committees as a vehicle for building trust. It is essential that the sides find the means to demonstrably cooperate regarding the pandemic and beyond.

The GTF Cyprus chapter would like to underline the fact that we should not lose sight of the bigger picture. This is the necessity of the resumption of the results-oriented talks as outlined on the statement following the informal meeting in Berlin on 25 November 2019. The ultimate goal is to achieve a comprehensive, fair and viable permanent solution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of a bi-zonal bi-communal federation and political equality of both communities living on the island, as this is prescribed in UN Security Council resolutions and summarized in the latest report of the UN Secretary General.

In concluding we would like to salute recent intercommunal co-operation in putting out fires which we see as an important confidence building measure that sets an example for the way forward and that we hope will facilitate the earliest resumption of talks without preconditions following the elections in the Turkish Cypriot community.

Charis Psaltis

Co-ordinator of the Greek Cypriot chapter of the GTF

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Erol Kaymak

Co-ordinator of the Turkish Cypriot Chapter of the GTF

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'E' followed by a series of connected loops and a long horizontal tail.