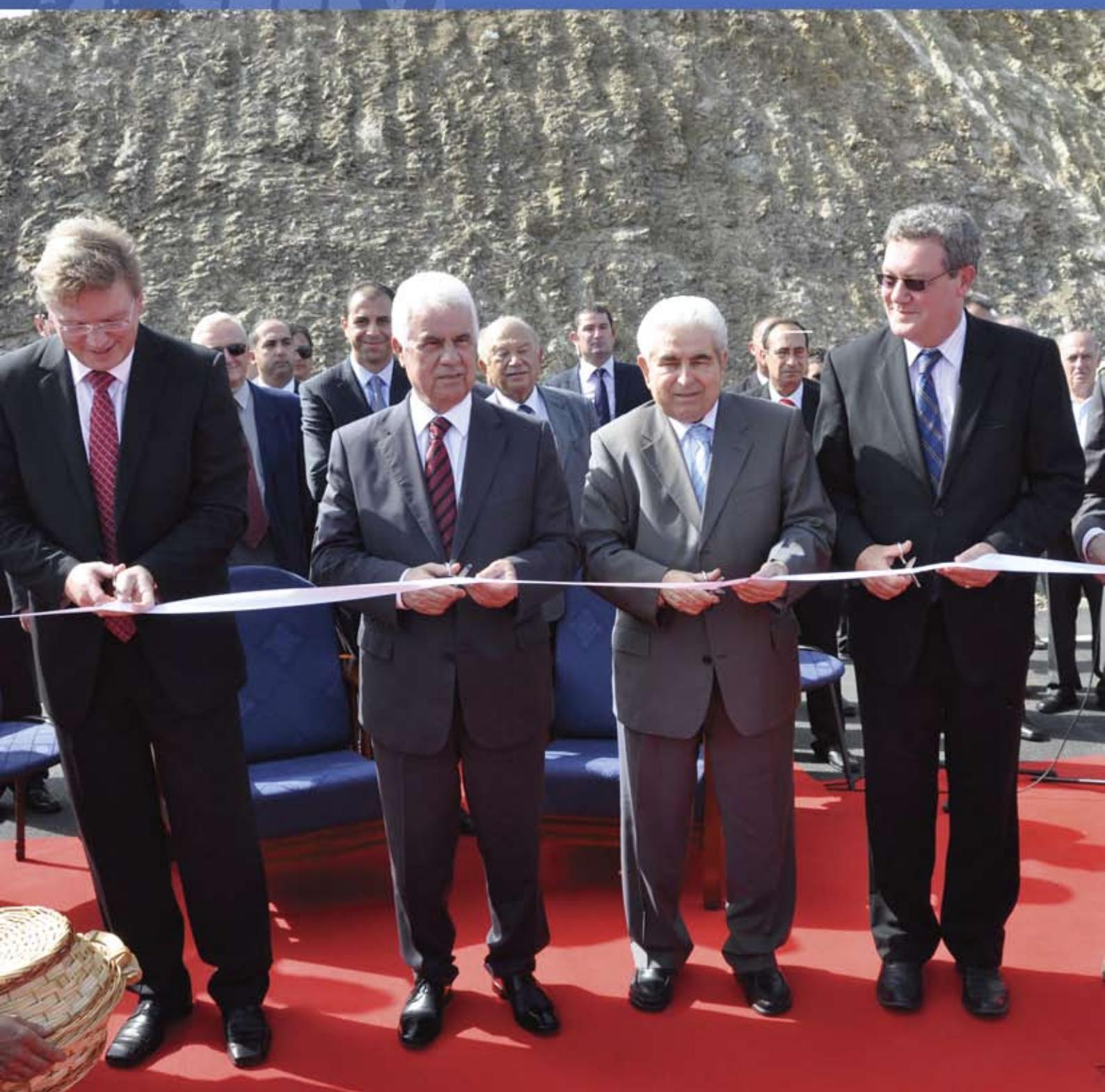


The Blue Beret



Opening of Limnitis/Yeşilırmak road



Editorial	2
Cyprus reunification talks have regained momentum	4
Window of opportunity in Cyprus talks 'rapidly closing' Ban warns	5
Opening of Limnitis/Yeşilirmak road	6/7
United Nations deminers in Cyprus reach 25,000 landmines cleared mark	8
Remembrance Day - Honouring Sacrifice	9
UN Staff Day 2010	10/11
UNFICYP Military Skills	12/13
Documentary on the humanitarian work of the CMP	14
FMPU Inspection/ New Faces	15
New faces	16/17
Serbian contingent joins UNFICYP / Farewell Toula Christou ..	18
Visits/Fireworks Night	19



Serving UNFICYP's civilian, military and police personnel

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"Cautiously Optimistic", Take Two

The months of October and November proved to be a particularly busy period on the island evidenced by the opening of another crossing point bridging its two communities, a new milestone reached by UN de-miners, the "tri-partite meeting" in New York between the Cyprus leaders and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and the release of two, not one, reports by the UN chief on the situation in Cyprus. These events have provided us with plenty of food for thought and give us reason to be hopeful as we approach the end of the year and embark on the next.

Since opening on 14 October the Limnitis/Yeşilirmak crossing point in the northwest of the island has helped breathe new life into the region and to strengthen relations between the island's two main communities. On average, around 2,000 people are using this new gateway on a weekly basis to visit people and places on either side of the divide. The opening not only marked the end of a long wait for residents in the region, but also offered a boost to the ongoing negotiations. Testament to this successful event was the decision by the leaders to establish a joint committee to look into opening additional crossing points across the island, a new body which will undoubtedly have its work cut out for it in 2011. Another highpoint was recently reached by UN de-miners who, in late October, surpassed the 25,000 landmines cleared and destroyed mark taking a major step towards a mine-free buffer zone and ultimately a mine-free Cyprus.

The peace talks also took an upward swing over the past several weeks with the leaders of the two communities agreeing to intensify their contacts and advance the process with the aim of reaching a lasting solution to the Cyprus issue. Following their meeting with Secretary-General Ban on 18 November, Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu agreed to take on a new approach in their negotiations by identifying further convergences and so-called "core issues" which still need to be resolved, across all the chapters. What this has translated into is even more leaders and Representatives meetings lined up in the coming weeks in view of their next encounter with the Secretary-General in Geneva scheduled for 26 January. The Geneva meeting has been sized up as yet another salient turning point whereby the two sides are expected to come up with proposals aimed at overcoming the differences which remain between them.

It's clear that the pace of the talks has picked up since the New York gathering and that further steps forward in the process have been made. While it's too early to tell what will come out of Geneva, the signs we've seen over the past weeks from the two sides gives us reason to be optimistic; however much work still remains. That being the case is cause for an old phrase to be unearthed - the UN remains "cautiously optimistic".



Cyprus reunification talks have regained momentum



UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (centre) met with Demetris Christofias (left), Greek Cypriot Leader, and Derviş Eroğlu, Turkish Cypriot leader on 18 November 2010 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Talks aimed at reaching an agreement that will lead to the reunification of the Mediterranean island of Cyprus have gathered pace since Secretary-

General Ban Ki-moon met with the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in November, the United Nations Special Adviser on the issue said on 30 November 2010. "The important thing is that the process maintains real momentum," Alexander Downer told reporters in New York after briefing the Security Council in a closed-door session. "That momentum slowed down very much during the last two or three months and I think with the Secretary-General's meeting on 18 November that momentum has picked up again and it is up to the leaders, of course, to maintain that momentum into the future," Mr. Downer said. The meeting between Mr. Ban and the Greek Cypriot leader, Demetris Christofias, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Derviş Eroğlu, took place in New York.

Mr. Downer said the process has "a good structure" and is unlikely to collapse, but added that negotiations on the "very complex" question of property had become "bogged down" before the Secretary-General met the two leaders. He stressed that it is important that the

leaders maintain the political will and the optimism of the public that an agreement is possible. He expressed appreciation for the Council's strong support to the process and pledged the UN's continued support for the talks.

At the 18 November meeting in New York, the two leaders agreed to intensify their contacts to advance progress in the talks aimed at achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue. The talks have been going on for some time "without clear progress or a clear end in sight," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said after the meeting at UN Headquarters in New York.

"The peace talks on Cyprus were losing momentum and needed a boost if the two sides are to reach a settlement while there is still the time and the political opportunity to do so," he told reporters. "Only the leaders can give it that boost." Mr. Ban announced that the leaders had agreed to intensify their contacts in the coming weeks "in order to establish a practical plan for overcoming the major remaining points of disagreement when he meets with them again in January.

Window of opportunity in Cyprus talks 'rapidly closing,' Ban warns

Warning that talks to reunite Cyprus could "founder fatally" if substantive agreement is not reached within the next few months, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is calling on the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders to ready a practical plan by January to overcome major differences.

"I fear a critical window of opportunity is rapidly closing," he says in his latest report to the Security Council on the United Nations-sponsored talks that seek to set up a Federal Government with a single international personality in a bi-zonal, bi-communal country with a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent State of equal status.

He cites fundamental differences on the issue of property on the Mediterranean island, where a UN peacekeeping mission has been in place since inter-communal violence erupted in 1964, and notes that parliamentary elections scheduled for May in the Republic of Cyprus as well as elections in Turkey in June militate against constructive negotiations in the second quarter of 2011.

The leaders have met 88 times since the start of negotiations in 2008, advancing in some areas, but there has been "a worrying lack of progress" in six months of talks on currently irreconcilable difference over property rights, says Mr. Ban, who met with the two leaders in New York on 18 November.

The Greek Cypriots say those with property in the north should be able to seek reinstatement, while Turkish Cypriots say that if all Greek Cypriot property owners there were allowed reinstatement, it would be impossible for the Turkish Cypriots to secure bizonality. They want a ceiling on the number of those who can have properties reinstated, instead of compensation.

"We must be clear that, in order to negotiate successfully a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, the two leaders will have to reconcile these and other seemingly irreconcilable issues," Mr. Ban writes, calling on Greek Cypriot leader Dimitris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu to "dedicate significant efforts" to preparing a practical plan for overcoming major remaining points of disagreement when he meets with them again in January.

"In any society, intense political moments such as elections are rarely a time for compromises or flexibility," he writes of the forthcoming electoral calendar. "If substantive agreement across all chapters cannot be concluded ahead of the election cycle, the talks may go into abeyance, and there is a serious risk that the negotiations could founder fatally."

Mr. Ban also warns of the need to avoid any inflammatory statements that could further stoke public scepticism over the talks, noting that despite the collegial atmosphere in which the leaders engage in the talks, their subsequent public rhetoric has not conveyed that the negotiations are moving forward and political leaders, both in government and the opposition, have accused the other side of undermining the talks.

"Occasional outbursts by the leaders about each other have not contributed to building public confidence in the leadership and the peace process," he says, calling on both sides to reverse the cycle of negative messaging since the success of the process will ultimately remain in the hands of the people, who will vote for an agreement in separate, simultaneous referendums.

"I would encourage the leaders to step forward individually and jointly to deliver more constructive and harmonized messages. This is their responsibility just as much as managing the talks is. This would enhance public trust and support for the peace process and make the task of the leaders easier by making information available in a constructive manner to both sides," he adds.

"Now, more than ever, as public support is flagging, civil society can play an important role in supporting the leaders and the process."

In a separate report on the 46-year old UN mission, known as UNFICYP, Mr. Ban calls on the Council to renew its mandate for another six months until 15 June, citing its work with his Special Advisor on the talks, Alexander Downer, and other UN agencies "actively engaged in promoting an atmosphere conducive to the negotiations."

The overall number of violations in the buffer zone has declined, but "low-level exercises near the ceasefire lines unnecessarily cause tensions and should be avoided," he says.

UNFICYP, with a strength of over 900 uniformed personnel, continues to work closely with the two communities in resolving practical day-to-day issues, including the civilian use of the buffer zone. "Such efforts are important in building confidence and positive relations between the communities, and I call on both sides to continue to support UNFICYP in that regard," he adds.

UN News Centre

The two reports can be viewed at www.unficyp.org or www.cyprustalks.org

Opening of Limnitis/Yeşilirmak road



The Cyprus leaders opened a new crossing point in the northwest of the island on 14 October 2010 linking its two communities, providing a boost to the ongoing UN-backed negotiations and marking the end of a long wait for residents in the region.

The opening of the Limnitis/Yeşilirmak crossing point, the seventh such access road linking the two sides, is the culmination of more than two years of concerted efforts by the leaders which will significantly reduce travel time across the region and allow for a more direct route for travellers to Nicosia.

Speaking at the event, which took place along the new stretch of road in the buffer zone linking the towns of Limnitis/Yeşilirmak and Kato Pyrgos/ Aşağı Pirgo, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser Alexander Downer said: "There is hope that the two leaders now can bring this country together and reunite Cyprus...and the success of this project simply demonstrates that point."

In a statement issued by his Spokesperson later in the day, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the opening of the crossing point, which he said would hopefully "lead to increased interaction and cooperation between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities" and "help strengthen the climate of trust and goodwill necessary for the negotiations to achieve a mutually-acceptable and lasting settlement as soon as possible."

The opening of the crossing point has long been a priority in discussions between the two Cyprus leaders and involved a number of steps taken over the past several months dating back to 21 March 2008 when the leaders first introduced the issue on their agenda as part of the ongoing negotiations aimed to reunify the divided island.

Addressing the opening, Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias expressed his hope that this day will "give impetus to the further strengthening of the cooperation between the organized groups and the ordinary people of the region, who have played a

significant role in the efforts to make this day possible."

For his part, Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu emphasized the importance of the opening of the crossing point and pronounced his support for future gateways across the island. "I believe that this step will contribute to healthy relations between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Therefore I support in principle the opening of other crossing points if deemed necessary."

The project involved the upgrading of the road of approximately six km carried out by the FAP Joint Venture – a bi-communal project comprised of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot businesses – and involved over 200 workers. "The 60-year old three-metre wide road has now become a new, two-lane, six-metre wide road," affirmed Tiziana Zennaro of the UNDP-Partnership for Peace in the Future – the lead UN agency on the project. Among other things, the upgraded road will prove vital for residents in the region travelling to hospitals for medical attention.

Attending today's event was European Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle who referred to it as "another example of this pursuit of peace" and reiterated full EU backing for the talks. "I am convinced that you can manage the historical task to arrive at a comprehensive settlement that reunites the island." Also present at the opening was Frank Urbancic, the Ambassador of the United States, representing one of the key financial donors to the project.

At the close of the event held inside the buffer zone the two leaders, accompanied by Mr Downer, Mr Füle, Ambassador Urbancic, and Mr Haoliang Xu of UNDP-New York, cut a ribbon symbolizing the much anticipated opening of the Limnitis/Yeşilirmak crossing point.

Following the ribbon-cutting, the two leaders made symbolic coffee shop visits to the two towns on either side of the road whose residents will be the primary beneficiaries of this newest access point bridging the two communities.



Above: The Cyprus leaders opened the Limnitis/Yeşilirmak crossing point, the seventh such access road linking the two sides on 14 October 2010.

Below: The Cyprus leaders Demetris Christofias and Derviş Eroğlu together with the Secretary-General's Special Adviser Alexander Downer visited the villages of Limnitis/Yeşilirmak and Kato Pyrgos whose residents will be the primary beneficiaries of this newest access point bridging the two communities.



United Nations deminers in Cyprus reach 25,000 landmines cleared mark

On 21 October 2010 the UN deminers in Cyprus achieved a significant milestone surpassing 25,000 landmines cleared and destroyed on the island, taking a major step towards a mine-free buffer zone and ultimately a mine-free Cyprus.

Since late 2004, teams of deminers associated with the UN Mine Action Centre in Cyprus (UNMACC) have been working on the island to rid the 180-km-long buffer zone of landmines originally laid during the outbreak of violence in 1974. The project is co-funded by the European Union and the Government of Cyprus through the UN Development Programme and executed by the UN Office for Project Service (UNOPS) with support from the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Thus far 14.3 million Euros has been spent on this project.

"Reaching this milestone is another important step forward in our activities serving the two communities and will hopefully serve as a prelude to a successful and satisfactory follow-on phase as we move towards our stated goal of a mine-free buffer zone and, eventually, we hope, a mine-free Cyprus," stated Lisa Buttenheim, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and Chief of Mission of UNFICYP.

In addition to reaching this notable landmark, since launching its operations six years ago the UNMACC has released over 9.5 million square metres of land for normal use, including the return of land for farming activities, and has cleared 71 minefields in the buffer zone. Of the 25,000 landmines cleared and destroyed, over 17,000 were anti-personnel and 8,000 anti-tank mines left behind from the 1974 events. It is estimated that as many as 15,000 landmines remain on the island and two million square metres of land may still be contaminated by landmines and unexploded ordnance.

The bulk of the mine clearance work on the island is carried out by deminers from Mozambique and Zimbabwe working with G4S Ordnance Management, a contractor hired by the UN for this specific purpose. The deminers comprise four manual teams made up of 12 individuals and one six-person mechanical team which operates the recently acquired Mini Minewolf remote controlled tiller system.



"Landmine removal and disposal is a painstaking and hazardous business involving precision, patience and, above all, expertise", stated Max Dyck, UNMACC Project Manager. "We have managed to get to where we are today with great cooperation from our stakeholders and we look forward to continue these good relationships with the aim of achieving a mine-free Cyprus," he added.

The UNMACC was established to provide planning, coordination and monitoring capability so that mine clearance activities are conducted in a safe and efficient manner. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the peace-building process in Cyprus, benefiting all Cypriots by removing the danger of landmines, improving freedom of movement on the island, and returning mine-free land to the community.

Since beginning its ground work in November 2004, UN deminers in Cyprus have suffered a number of casualties, including the death last October of Felisberto Novele, a team leader from Mozambique who died from an explosion in a now cleared minefield near Geri some 10 kilometers southeast of Nicosia. Mr Novele's death and other demining casualties, among them an accident resulting in a deminer losing his leg at an on-site accident in March 2008, serve as tragic reminders of the dangers involved in mine clearance work and the threats landmines still pose on the island.

Another noteworthy achievement was the clearance of all landmines in Nicosia declared in November 2006 which involved the removal of over 2,500 mines in 19 minefields in Cyprus' capital and its surrounding areas. In addition to the humanitarian aspects of demining, the political impact of clearance is significant as it will both eliminate a physical barrier that divides the two sides and build confidence for other joint initiatives. Discussions between all relevant stakeholders regarding continuing the clearance initiative have shown significant progress.

"Our hope is that today's announcement will instill an even stronger commitment on the part of both communities to rid the island completely of its deadly landmines heritage driven by the recognition that landmines have no place in any civilized society," stated Ms Buttenheim.

Remembrance Day - honouring sacrifice



Remembrance Sunday – celebrated internationally on the eleventh day of the eleventh month – was marked by UNFICYP on 14 November at Wayne's Keep Cemetery located within the buffer zone area of Nicosia.

More than 250 people including the civilian, police and military leadership of the mission as well as representatives of the diplomatic community, soldiers and guests from the local community attended the memorial service.

The service was led by the Reverend James McWhirter from Sector 2, and delivered in English, Spanish and Slovakian, with the help of fellow padres Father Angel Omar Ojeda from Sector 1 and Padre Jan Cupalka from Sector 4.

Although a British and Commonwealth tradition, the Service of Remembrance was a truly international affair where soldiers from 7 Transport Regiment RLC joined with other uniformed members of the United Nations, their civilian counterparts, the wider international community and veterans of past and present wars to remember those who have lost their lives and lay traditional poppy wreaths as a sign of respect.





UN Staff Day 2010

UNFICYP civilian, police and military personnel turned out in force for the annual UN Staff day activities held on Friday 22 October 2010. This long standing tradition associated with the UN birthday celebrations was held for the fifth year running at UNFICYP.

The BBQ lunch provided by the chefs of the international cafeteria and the open-air family events ranging from sports, music, dancing and board games were a big hit. Not to mention the tests of skill and strength in the tug of war.



Football Tournament



Sixteen teams battled hard during the two week football tournament with some starting off with very convincing football, while others needed that extra 'kick' to get them going.

If there was one team that made an early exit it has to be Deminers A team who turned up with a quality team, and great number of fans, played good clean entertaining football with passion and heart but lost 4-3 to ARGCON CEIBO when the match went to a penalty shoot-out.

A heroic Goalkeeper from Military Police prevented a humiliating defeat from ARGCON MATE with a number of superb saves. Serious contenders Paraguay scored the fastest goal of the tournament, and seemed to be one of the favourites, pulled together with an exhibition of skills, easily beating UN Flight 3-0. Sector 2 A team, posed a very powerful squad beating MFR A 3-2, but just didn't pull it off on the day, as Paraguay were ready, again, to punish with great exchange passes to kill the game 2-1. Sector 2 B eased past a rather weaker SLOVAK Engineer team compared to last year's winners, while Chile turned up with a respectable and loud crowd to give Deminers B a sizzling hot game, winning 2-1, only for ARGCON MATE to take the heat out of their celebrations two days later, steaming them with a 3-1 grilling, including many spicy goal attempts.

The semi finals were no easy contest, with two ARGCON teams, Paraguay, and SECTOR 2 B ready to fight it out on the day. Sector 2 B turned up on Friday to dismantle ARGCON CEIBO 4-0 with convincing domination throughout the match, and with quality football skills and power. Paraguay seemed unstoppable up until then and played a tough match with no easy winner, only to be eliminated in the semi final with a very unfortunate late own goal losing 2-1 to ARGCON MATE.



The UN Day Football Cup Final was now set for kick-off as the lads from Ledra Palace SECTOR 2 B came face to face with ARGCON MATE from Camp Rocca, Skouriotissa. It was clash of the Titans, and as the match got off to a nervous and cautious start from both, there was a nice sunny breeze to compliment the atmosphere of singing, drumming, and whistling from the travelling fans, showing off their huge national flags.

ARGCON capitalized with a few slick moves and typical quick exchanges, just before half time to open the score. They secured a psychological advantage at the break as the ARGCON fans began their drum ceremony in traditional fashion and with their flags raised high.

The second half was make or break for SECTOR 2 who began with a series of early assaults and risky attacks in what seemed to be a successful change of team plan. ARGCON were forced to retreat with some very tight defending but were very cool headed at retaining ball possession, confidence and positioning by breaking down SECTOR 2 play, and of course winding down the clock.

The match finished 1-0 to ARGCON and as the final whistle blew there was a massive pitch invasion of celebrating fans.

Let us not forget all the ladies who turned up in good numbers on Friday, and from many nationalities to put on a great display for everyone to see. Many were able to show off their football playing skills. A splendid match was enjoyed in good spirit and observed by the loyal spectators who created a very friendly atmosphere throughout the long day. For me everyone's a winner on the day, especially those who made a brave effort to turn up and participate for the first time.

By Rick Demetriou

UNFICYP MILITARY SKILLS

The eagerly awaited second Military Skills Competition of the year took place on 24 November 2010 in the UNPA. The winners of the previous competition held in March, Sector 2 - team A had their eyes on taking the trophy again in November. Sector 4, who came in a close second in the summer competition, also trained hard, leaving no stone unturned in their preparation to win the trophy. The competition began in the early hours of the morning at 6am, while it was still dark yet everybody could feel the anticipation in the air as all sectors lined up at the start for the first endurance stand.

Following the first test of their physical strength, all competing teams turned their eyes on to the more sophisticated tasks aimed at demonstrating their military knowledge and skills. They underwent the following disciplines: driving skills, command task, incident reaction, map reading, shooting, patrolling and observation. The teams gave their best and tried to score as many points as possible to get ahead in the competition. The closing discipline was the assault course, which again demonstrated the physical preparedness of the teams, but it was also the test of their psychological and mental capabilities. Towards the end of the competition, competitors were mentally and physically exhausted and feeling depleted of energy but there were smiles of satisfaction at having completed the course.

After a hard days contest the winners were announced as follows: Sector 4 - team A in first place; followed by the UNPOL team in second; and Sector 1 - team A in third. UNFICYP Force Commander, Rear Admiral Mario Sanchez Debernardi, personally



congratulated and thanked all the competitors and expressed his appreciation not only to the winning Slovak team, but also highlighted the impressive performance by the UNPOL-team who managed to take second place despite..... Shouts of joy and laughter greeted his announcement of the winning teams as feelings of pride and satisfaction could be seen on the faces of all competitors, evidence of their team spirit and hard work which provided them the hard-earned victory they so eagerly sought.

I took a part in this event and had the opportunity to see a lot of people, working hard on improving their personal capabilities and skills and must acknowledge that to be better or best is not a question of happiness, but a way thinking.

By Tomas Dano



Documentary on the humanitarian work of the Committee on Missing Persons

The humanitarian work of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) was presented in a 20-minute documentary, at a special gathering on 14 October at Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone area of Nicosia.

EU Enlargement Commissioner, Stefan Fule, Elsi Christofias, wife of Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Kudret Özersay, Representative of Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu addressed the ceremony.

The documentary titled "Digging a future", shows footage of onsite exhumations, carried out by Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot anthropologists and scientists, the matching of the bones in the CMP's anthropology lab, parts of identification process, as well as statements of families of the missing and a message by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Mrs. Christofias said her presence at the event was in her capacity as someone directly affected by the issue of missing persons, in that her brother has been missing since the events of 1974.

"I know first hand the pain and agony so many relatives are experiencing, and can personally testify about the anguish and the inner suffering a mother and a father are going through," she added.

Mrs. Christofias also said that the Turkish Cypriot leader's spouse, Meral Eroğlu has a brother missing for 46 years, adding that it is only recently through the CMP that she was able to learn about his fate, touch his remains and together with relatives and friends, mourn his death through a proper burial.

"I wish to be able to do the same with my brother. I am deeply saddened by the thought that my mother, like my father, might die without knowing his fate," she said.

Referring to CMP, Mrs Christofias said "the spirit of cooperation that prevails, the willingness with which they approach their work, their determination and the humanitarian spirit with which they try to find and analyze every piece of bone, irrespective of whether it belongs to one or the other community, give to Cyprus and other parts of the world a good example of how things should be done."

"It helps towards a more constructive vision this island needs the most. Such a humanitarian task

deserves to be supported by all," she concluded.

Speaking on behalf of Meral Eroğlu, Turkish Cypriot Representative Kudret Özersay said his father has been missing ever since he was six months old.

Noting that the remains of his father have been located and identified, he added that "the body of my father was younger than me when I buried him in 2006."

Özersay pledged they would do their utmost to prevent any obstacles from blocking the way of the humanitarian task of the CMP.

EU Commissioner, Fule reiterated that the EU supports the leaders of the two communities in their effort to find a solution to the long standing Cyprus problem, pointing out that as more time goes by, the more difficult it will be to solve the problem and the higher the cost of the non-solution.

"I am convinced that the price of non-solution is much higher than that of finding of compromise, he added, noting "a solution creates a win-win situation for everybody, not only for Cyprus, but also for Greece, Turkey and Europe."

He commended the work of the CMP and expressed his strong sympathy to the families of the missing persons.

"The success of the CMP shows the determination of those who work together for common good and to heal the wounds of the past," he said, adding the cooperation the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who staff the CMP give hope for the future of Cyprus. "Let us use your example as a good example as good omen for the future. You deserve it, Cyprus deserves it," he stressed.

Concluding, Fule said that the European Commission has earmarked an additional three million euro for the CMP, raising the EU's total financial assistance to the CMP to six million euro.

Elias Georgiades, Greek Cypriot member of the CMP, referred to the fact that Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriots work together in the CMP, noting that this "should be replicated in other aspects of life."

Gülden Plümer Küçük, Turkish Cypriot member of the CMP, commended the leaders of the two communities, as without their support "we would not be able to continue the project."



Kudret Özersay, Representative of Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu



EU Enlargement Commissioner, Stefan Fule (Centre) with Elias Georgiades, Greek Cypriot member of the CMP (Left) and Gülden Plümer Küçük, Turkish Cypriot member of the CMP



Elsi Christofias, wife of Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias

FMPU Inspection

Force commander Rear admiral Mario Sanchez Debernardi conducted inspections of all sectors and unites at the end of October and in early November following the major troop rotations of all contingents. The inspections aimed at assessing the operational capability of the force and ensuring that it remains at a high standard at all times. The Force Commander had the opportunity to meet with the troops of the various contingents and had the opportunity to participate in patrols as well as visit observation posts and talk with the troops on the ground. During his inspection of the FMPU the Force Commander was given a demonstration on fingerprint detection using scenes of crime kit by Crime Scene Investigator Staff Sergeant Gary Brown and fingerprint sample taking and analysis by Special Investigator Staff Sergeant Rick Hubbuck. Other forms of crime Scene examination were demonstrated including the 'PathFinder' electro-magnetic footprint lifting capability.



New faces

Information Assistant

Cem Huseyin Cicek took up the post of Information Assistant in the Public Information Office in October 2010. He studied English Literature, Language and Communication both in Cyprus and Malaysia. Following his graduation from University, he stayed in Kuala Lumpur, where he worked in the fashion, lifestyle, and media Industries for 8 years. Following his return to Cyprus in 2004, Cem worked in numerous USAID, EU and UNDP financed projects in small and medium sized enterprises development, civil society organizations capacity building and environmental conservation. Additionally, Cem has been working as a freelance interpreter/translator in the EU harmonization process in the Turkish Cypriot community. Prior to joining UNFICYP, Cem was the Media Relations Consultant for UNDP-ACT, where he was responsible for preparing daily media reviews in Turkish. He also supported UNDP-ACT project partners in preparing, translating (into Turkish) and distributing media releases.



Regional Administrative Officer, JLOC

Tanja Bunjac arrived in UNFICYP on 15 November 2010 and assumed the post of Regional Administrative Officer in the Joint Logistics Operation Centre (JLOC). She joined the UN in 1992 and has served in UNPROFOR, UNTAES, UNMIBH, UNMOP, UNMIL to name but a few missions, as well as with UNDP/UNOPS and briefly with OSCE. During the last five years Tanja served in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq and is experienced in the administration and logistics of peacekeeping missions, from the deployments and the start-up phases all the way through to mission liquidations. She is an avid reader of political economy books and a big fan of History Channel.



Second in Command – Force Military Police Unit



Capt Radovan Smatana arrived in UNFICYP in September to take up the post of second in command of the Force Military Police Unit. He graduated from the Military Academy in Liptovsky Mikulas specializing in Air Defense Systems. His previous appointments include Duty Officer for Radar Signals Processing Team, Watchkeeper for Own Aviation Survey Unit, Platoon Commander of Logistics, Analyst of Exposure and Crime Document Department, Military Police, Officer in Command of Exposure and Crime Document Department, Analysis and Crime Prevention Department, Military Police Directorate. In 2006 he completed the Military Police Officers Basic Course training in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, USA and in 2009 he completed a Police Investigation Course from the Police Academy Bratislava. He is married to Eva and they have two children.



Major Zoran Nestorović was born in Zaječar, Serbia in February 1972. After high school he entered the Military Academy in Belgrade, from which he graduated in 1995. He was then appointed platoon commander and company commander at the Engineer School Centre in Obrenovac (Serbia). In 2000 he was appointed to the position of staff officer at the Engineer Regiment HQ in Podgorica (Montenegro) and at the Engineer School Centre HQ in Obrenovac. In 2003 he was appointed Deputy Battalion Commander and later Battalion Commander. In 2007 he was appointed staff officer in the Training section of the Training Command in Belgrade. This is his first UN mission. Maj Nestorović is married to Dragica and they have two daughters Marija (7) and Sofija (4). His hobbies include aquaristics and movies.

Liaison Officer

Sector 4 Deputy Commander



Lt Col Imre Kovács arrived in UNFICYP on 22 September 2010 to take up the post of sector 4 Deputy Commander. Born on 14 February 1963 in Hajdúszoboszló, Hungary, he graduated from the Military Technical University in 1986 as a lieutenant. Lt Col Kovács started his carrier as a Logistics Officer. From 1991 to 2002 he was assigned to the MH 86th Helikopterbase as a Logistics Chief. From 2002 to 2007, at the rank of major, he served as a Supplier Helicopter Battalion Chief of Staff. In 2007 he graduated from the National Defense University in Hungary and was promoted to lieutenant colonel. He worked for MH 86th Helikopterbase as a battalion commander and deals with Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training as well as being involved in military organization. This is his first tour of duty as a peacekeeper. He is married to Ilona and they have a son, Máté (16) and a daughter, Nikolett (19). In his free time he enjoys fishing, reading.



Lt Colonel Lubomir Chrenko took up the position of Liaison Officer for the Turkish Forces at the end of September. He was born in Revuca, Slovakia in October 1962 and began his military career at the Air Force Military Academy in Košice (Slovakia), from which he graduated in 1986, in Automated Navigation Systems. In the same year he was assigned as training officer to the Air Force Support Battalion, in Námest nad Oslavou, (former Czechoslovakia). In 1988 he was appointed to the post of Staff Officer and Senior Staff Officer at the Air Force Division, in Český Krumlov, (former Czechoslovakia), where he remained until 1992. In 1993 he was one of the builders the Slovak Air force and held a number of positions mainly at the Air Force HQ and Control and Reporting Centre including: Ground Interceptor Controller, Chief of the Air Space management Cell and his last assignment was COS the Air Command, Control and Surveillance Brigade in Zvolen (Slovakia). Throughout his military career he pursued a number of courses including the Staff Officers Orientation Course in the Netherlands, Winter Mountain Combat Training in Switzerland, UNMOC – the UN Military Observer Course in Switzerland. This is his third UN mission, having served with UNMSET - UN Mission for Support in East Timor in 2003, second tour of duty in Cyprus having served with UNFICYP in 2007. His hobbies include alpine skiing, travelling, cycling, technical literature. Lt Col Chrenko has four children Michal, Veronica, Andrej, and Tomáš.

CO SECTOR 2



Lt Col 'JB' Brown of the Royal Logistic Corp (RLC) took over command of Sector 2 at the end of September. He was commissioned in 1987 and has been in command of 7 Regiment since Jan 2009. A graduate from the Canadian Staff College with an MSc in Defence Logistics Management from Cranfield University, previous appointments include Adjutant 157 Transport Regiment RLC, SO3 Media Ops Joint HQ, British Forces Cyprus, Officer Commanding 2 Transport Squadron, SO2 J1/J4 Plans in the Joint Headquarters, British Forces Falkland Islands, SO2 J4 at Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), and SO1 Operations Joint Supply Chain Performance Management (JSC PM). He has operational experience, deployed on OP GRANBY in Iraq, OP BANNER in Northern Ireland and OP TELIC in Baghdad as the Deputy J4 in the J4 Branch, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq and on his return took up his current command of 7 Regiment RLC. He is married to Angélica and has a daughter. A reluctant retiree from the rugby field, his interests include music, literature, military history, fitness training, ice hockey (Chairman RLC Ice Hockey) and skiing.



Captain Zsolt Kovacs took over the post of duty officer in the Ops Branch in September 2010. He was born in Szombathely, Hungary on 22 September 1974 and graduated from the Air Force Officer College in Szolnok as a weapon system engineer in 1998. He began his career as an officer at the 87th Bakony Combat Helicopter Regiment. During the 6 years he served with this Regiment he held a number of appointments, including maintenance engineer of helicopters, company 2IC and logistic officer. Since 2004 he has been working at Papa Air Base as a shift commander of the Base Operation Center. In 2001-2002 he served in Kosovo as a staff Officer of the Hungarian Guard and Security Battalion. Captain Kovacs is married to Csilla, and they have a four year old daughter Janka. In his free time he enjoys sports including swimming and wind surfing as well as constructing their family house.

Serbian contingent joins UNFICYP

The military pillar of UNFICYP welcomed the seven-member Serbian contingent to its fold on 21 October. The Republic of Serbia, as independent state, for first time in its history is contributing a professional military unit to peacekeeping mission in Cyprus. The Serbian contingent commander Major Zoran Nestorovic, took up the position of Force Engineer Assistant at UNFICYP HQ in Nicosia. The remaining six Serbian soldiers will be attached to the Hungarian Platoon in Sector 4, located in Saint Istvan camp in Athienou where they will be assigned patrolling duties. Commenting on his assignment to UNFICYP, Major Zoran Nestorović said it is an honour and privilege to have this opportunity to participate in the peacekeeping mission as military unit. To date the Serbian Armed Forces have participated in international missions of the UN only with military observers on an individual basis and medical teams in Africa (MONUSCO, UNMIL, UNOCI, MINURCAT). Overall Serbia contributes to UN missions with 36 military and civilian personnel.



Visits

UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi and Chief of Staff Colonel Gerard Hughes received the following guests during October/November 2010.



Belgian Prime Minister Mr Yves Leterme was welcomed by Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi at Ledra Palace Hotel on 1 October 2010 where he was taken on a tour of the green line.



Hungarian Minister of Defence, Dr Csaba Hende, visited UNFICYP on Sunday 17 October 2010 where he met with Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi. He then visited Sector 4 where the Hungarian contingent is based.



Commander British Forces, Air Vice Marshal Stacey MBE BSc MA RAF visited UNFICYP on 17 November 2010 where he met with Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez and Chief of Staff Colonel Gerard Hughes.

Farewell Toula Christou



On Monday 1 November 2010, for the first time since August 1976, the FMPU headquarters opened without Mrs Toula Christou as an employee. Having previously worked for the RAF Nicosia Station, Mrs Christou joined the then UN MP Company as a clerk.

She soon became a key member of the UN MPs with her friendly personality and strong sense of integrity and loyalty making her ideal to work in a police environment. Mrs Christou worked her way to become the Relations and Liaison Assistant which gave her a wide ranging set of duties translating reports and liaising with the Cypriot Police. She developed close personal ties with the police hierarchy

and was a source of advice and assistance to all in the FMPU. She had the historical record for the Unit and any questions about the history of the FMPU would be answered by Mrs Christou with an enlightening story.

Mrs Christou served alongside 24 different Provost Marshals and has seen many changes from the UN NP Company to the FMPU and many changes in the mission. Her memories, knowledge, honesty and friendship will be remembered by all those who served with her. All members of the FMPU, past and present, wish Toula a long and happy retirement and thank her for all she has done for the Unit and the Mission.

Fireworks Night

Fireworks Night has been a permanent event on the UNFICYP calendar for many years and is always eagerly awaited by adults and children alike. This year's event was held on 29 October at the Old Nicosia International Airport. To ensure the event was as good as possible, planning started in early July and was well supported by all sectors and contingents within the mission. As the night attracts a large audience from all sectors the national contingents play a big part in the organising and execution of this event. Each nation involved in the mission produces its own national dish and over the years this has proved to be very popular. The Argentinean contingent produce the BBQ, the Hungarian and Slovakian contingents produce a wonderful goulash, sausages and a traditional cabbage soup and the British contingent produce the national dish, a curry (what else?) The Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess of HQ BRITCON provided the all important bar, a wonderful children's disco and children's tent with candy floss and cakes.



All this, along with a fantastic fireworks display and huge bonfire, added to the overall enjoyment for the many people who attended. With the huge effort of the many people who were involved, the event was a great success and well over 800 adults and children attended.

Remembrance Day 2010

