

Welcome to our Newsletter #3!

This newsletter is prepared under the InPeace 'Inclusive Peacebuilding' Project, which is funded by the European Union (EU) under the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community and implemented by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Law, Alternative and Innovative Methods (ICLAIM) and the Human Rights Platform (IHP), between 2023 and 2026. InPeace aims to generate knowledge and draw lessons relating to the operation and effectiveness of the bi-communal Technical Committees.

The bi-communal Technical Committees were established by the Greek Cypriot (GC) and Turkish Cypriot (TC) community leaders to 'address issues that affect the day-to-day life of people, through encouraging and facilitating greater interaction and understanding between the two communities'. Since their establishment in 2008, the number of Technical Committees has grown to 12. These Committees are unique mechanisms run under UN auspices, operated by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, to address shared challenges and meet shared goals for Cyprus.

Although the Technical Committees improve our daily lives and contribute to the collaboration between the two communities, little is known about their work and projects they implement. The main aim of this newsletter is to disseminate information on their progress and inform the public about their achievements and ongoing projects. Information provided in this newsletter covers the period between 1 March 2024 and 31 August 2024 and is collected through UN reports, online newspapers, and social media publications of UN bodies in Cyprus.

Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH) completed 4 different conservation works in different parts of Cyprus. These are the (a) Quirini Bastion in Nicosia, (b) Agios Sergios and Vakhos church in Neta/Taşlıca, (c) Arif Bey Aqueduct in Afanteia/Gazikoy, and (d) Hamidiye Mosque in Lefkara. These projects were implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the TCCH under the project 'Supporting Cultural Heritage Monuments of Great Importance in Cyprus', which is funded by the EU.

Apart from the completed works, the Committee has 7 different ongoing conservation works. These are the (a) Timios Prodromos Church in Gypsou/Akova, (b) Agios Elias Church in Agios Elias/Yarköy, (c) mosque in the village of Kalavasos/Kalavason, (d) mosque in the village of Alaminos/Aleminyo, (e) Agia Paraskevi Church in Famagusta, (f) Chrysopolitissa Church in Kyrenia, and (g) mosque in Avdimou/Evdim.

Moreover, the TCCH announced the organisation of a series of presentations on the projects of the Committee. The initial session focused on an introduction to the work of the TCCH and the procedures followed by the UNDP regarding the conservation designs, and it took place at the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber (ETEK) in June 2024. On the occasion of the 'International Day for Monuments and Sites', the TCCH organised a visit to Martinengo Cluster in Famagusta that brought together around 100 Greek and Turkish Cypriots students as well as students from other nationalities, on the 25th of April 2024. This event showed a shared commitment to promoting peace, dialogue, and understanding, as well as an appreciation of the significance of Cyprus' rich cultural heritage.

Technical Committee on Health

The Technical Committee on Health completed a training on Aedes invasive mosquitoes on the 1st of March, which brought together around 50 participants from both communities interested in mosquito behaviour, surveillance, and prevention. A follow-up session, on the 26th of April, had over 50 participants and included practical field visits and best practice sharing, further enhancing bi-communal collaboration in combating mosquito-borne diseases in Cyprus. Both trainings were funded by the European Union, organised by UNDP, and coordinated by OSASG-Cyprus. This work of the Technical Committee became even more important after Cyprus recorded its first case of West Nile virus, which is transmitted by the Aedes invasive mosquitos, in October 2024.



The Technical Committee on the Environment

The Technical Committee on the Environment marked World Wildlife Day with a field visit to the Buffer Zone on the 3rd of March. The visit focused on testing pilot natural conservation methods; moreover, tree pruning, pest control, and the installation of barn owl nesting boxes were conducted. On the 21st of March, the Committee visited a micro-reserve dedicated to protecting the Tulipa Cypria, an endemic species of plants, reinforcing its commitment to biodiversity. On the 25th of June, it organised a clean-up of natural waterways to protect wildlife, including the endangered mouflon. Furthermore, on the 17th of July, the Committee invited civil society organisations to submit proposals for the “Environmental Caretakers Project”, aimed at engaging youth in environmental conservation.

Apart from these activities, the Committee held a working group meeting on the 27th of July within the scope of the Geo-heritage project, which aims to teach children about Cyprus’ geological history. The meeting brought together educators, teachers, and CSOs with an interest in geology and geology-related topics, as well as an interest in non-formal educational approaches for teaching children about the geology of Cyprus. Also, as part of the same project, the Technical Committee announced two field visits for young geologists (ages 15-35) scheduled for 14th and 28th September 2024. To participate in the field visits, attendees were required to join a seminar on the geology of Cyprus on 5th September at Ledra Palace Hotel. All the abovementioned activities of the Committee were funded by the European Union, organised by UNDP and coordinated by OSASG.



The Technical Committee on Culture

The Technical Committee on Culture organised ‘Connecting Arts 2,’ an event that brought together over 60 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot artists, academics, and experts. The event took place on 25th May at Chateau Status Restaurant in the buffer zone, was funded by the EU, and organised by UNDP in coordination with OSASG-Cyprus. The event, which ran for the second time in two years, contributed to fostering unity through discussions about music, cinema, literature, folk arts, performing arts, and fine arts, and promoted cultural exchanges and future cross-community collaborations.

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters maintained its regular activities through Joint Communication Rooms in Nicosia and Pyla/Pile, as well as regular meetings. The Committee successfully facilitated the exchange of five suspects from one community to the other. On 5th June, a bi-communal seminar was organised, focusing on economic cybercrimes targeting vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly, in response to shared concerns about the increasing threat of such crimes on the island.

The Technical Committee on Broadcasting and Telecommunication

The Technical Committee on Broadcasting and Telecommunication completed the ‘Agreement to transition to 5G’, allowing 5G implementation in the areas under the effective control of the RoC, with plans for expansion in the areas not under its effective control. The Committee also continued its efforts to address frequency interference and maintain updated agreements.

The Coordinator of the InPeace at the Tartu Conference in Estonia

The project coordinator of InPeace, Dr Nasia Hadjigeorgiou, attended the Eighth Annual Tartu Conference on East European and Eurasian Studies in Estonia. She presented the preliminary research findings of the project, on the bi-communal Technical Committees in Cyprus in a panel with papers discussing other frozen conflict contexts. In the panel discussion that followed her presentation, she discussed the lessons that can be drawn from Cyprus in relation to different frozen conflict settings.



If you want to read Nasia Hadjigeorgiou’s articles about Technical Committees, click on the links below:

Nasia Hadjigeorgiou, ‘[The Bicomunal Technical Committees in Cyprus: A Rare Example of ‘Engagement without Recognition’ \(Blog for the European Centre for Minority Issues, 3 May 2024\)](#)

Nasia Hadjigeorgiou, ‘[Technical Committees show two sides on the island can work together’ \(Newspaper article for Cyprus Mail, 10 September 2023\)](#)

