

Welcome to our Newsletter #1!

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) since March 2023. InPeace aims to generate knowledge, and draw lessons relating to, the operation and effectiveness of the bicommunal Technical Committees.

In 2008, six 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 then, six more Technical Committees have been added to the list. There are currently 12 bi-communal Technical Committees, which are unique mechanisms operating by the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, under the auspices of the UN, in order to address shared challenges and aims for Cyprus.

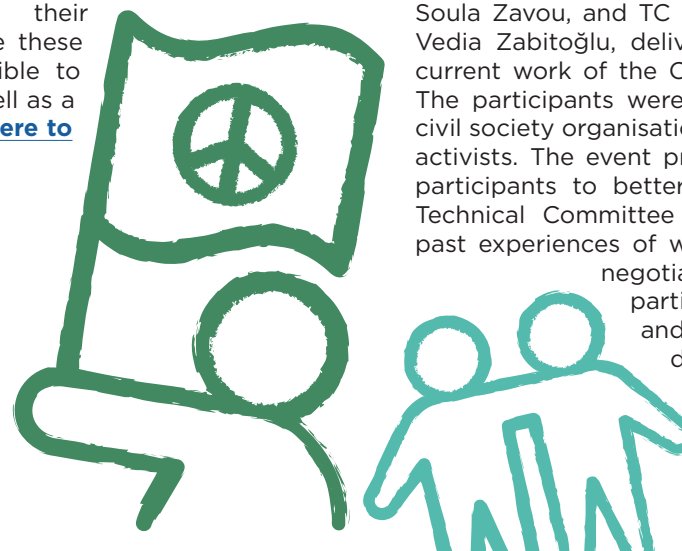
Although their work improves our daily lives and contributes to collaboration between the two communities, little is known about the bi-communal Technical Committees. The main aim of this newsletter is to disseminate information on their progress and inform the communities about their achievements and ongoing projects. Information provided in Newsletter #1 covers the period between 1 January 2023 and 31 July 2023 and has been collected from the UN reports, online newspapers, and social media publications of the UN bodies in Cyprus.

Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage



The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage completed the conservation works of the Zuhuri Lodge and Enkomi/Tuzla Bath in Larnaca, the mosque in the Maroni Village of Larnaca, the Agios Georgios and Panagia Agia Napa churches in Famagusta, and the Agios Georgios church in the Ardana/Ardahan Village of Trikomo/İskele. These projects were implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage under the project 'Supporting Cultural Heritage Monuments of Great Importance in Cyprus' which is funded by the EU. The opening events for these projects highlighted the need to preserve our common heritage for future generations and the importance of peacebuilding on the island.

Apart from the conservation works, the Technical Committee launched their website on Cyprus Digital Heritage. The aim of the website, which involves virtual tours of cultural heritage sites restored and protected by the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, is to protect the cultural treasures of Cyprus, ensure their sustainability, and make these treasures easily accessible to both communities as well as a global audience ([click here to access the website](#)).



Technical Committee on Gender Equality



The Technical Committee on Gender Equality organised a seminar at the Ledra Palace Hotel on the 9th of May, 2023. The event was a part of the Committee's efforts to implement the 'action plan on ways to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the settlement process/an eventual settlement process in Cyprus', which was announced in 2022 ([click here to download the Action Plan](#)). The seminar was aided by the Support Facility to Technical Committees Project funded by the EU and implemented by the UNDP in coordination with the Office of the Special Advisor for the Secretary General (OSASG).

The Technical Committee invited Ms. Polly Ioannou and Ms. Sülen Karabacak to speak to members of civil society and share their experience as significant contributors to the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot negotiating teams throughout the years. Moreover, the GC co-chair of the Committee, Ms. Soula Zavou, and TC member of the Committee Ms. Vedia Zabitoğlu, delivered speeches, explaining the current work of the Committee and its future plans. The participants were mainly the representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) and gender equality activists. The event provided an opportunity for the participants to better understand the work of the Technical Committee on Gender and the valuable past experiences of women who participated in the negotiations. In the end, the participants asked their questions and/or made contributions to the discussion.



Technical Committee on Culture

The Connecting Arts event was organised by the Technical Committee on Culture in Nicosia on the 30th of June, 2023. The event was funded by the EU under the Support Facility to the Technical Committees project. It provided an opportunity for over 60 artists from both communities to come together and exchange ideas as well as experiences in the thematic areas of music, cinema, literature, folk arts, performing arts and fine arts.

Technical Committee on Crisis Management

After the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, the Technical Committee on Crisis Management initiated discussions regarding earthquake response in Cyprus. A meeting was organised by the Committee on the 11th of May, 2023 with the participation of civil engineering, emergency response and geology experts. Moreover, another meeting was held before the summer period to discuss the coordination and effective response to the wildfires.

On the 5th of May, the Turkish Cypriot counterparts requested assistance via the UN from the Republic of Cyprus for the extinguishing of a wildfire in Limnitis/ Yeşilirmak, which was approved. Moreover, the Turkish Cypriots offered assistance via the Technical Committee on Crisis Management to the Republic of Cyprus when a wildfire broke out in the Limassol region, but the request was reportedly rejected.

Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters organised a seminar on 'Domestic Violence: Focusing on Child Abuse and Femicide with Emphasis on Prevention' on the 31st of May, 2023 at Ledra Palace Hotel. During the seminar, the co-chairs of the Technical Committee, Andreas Kapardis and Salih Doratli, as well as Mission's Senior Advisor, Aderemi Adekoya, and the United Nations Police - UNPOL Senior Police Advisor, Assistant Police Commissioner Satu Koivu delivered speeches explaining the importance of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters and its recent work. After that, presentations were delivered by experts, Prof. Andreas Kapardis, Prof. Süheyla Erbilin, Ms Leyla Yorgancıoğlu Usta and Ms Iro Michael, covering violence against women and children, the effect of such violence on child development, and support mechanisms for survivors.

The Joint Contact Room (JCR), a sub-committee of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, operating in Nicosia and Pyla/Pile, continued with collaboration and information exchange between the two communities. The JCR operates on a day-to-day basis and it enables direct exchange of information relating to the prevention and fighting of crime.

Technical Committee on Health

Medications and vaccinations were successfully transferred from the Republic of Cyprus to the Turkish Cypriot community thanks to the Technical Committee on Health. Through the Technical Committee's Subcommittee on Veterinary Affairs, the two communities also collaborated to address the potential risk of the spread of the sheep pox illness, which was discovered among animals in the Turkish Cypriot community.

