

**CONFERENCE OF CHAIRPERSONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEES OF
THE PARLIAMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**
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Human Rights in Cyprus

Intervention by Mr. Sofoclis Fittis, M.P. (Cyprus)

Dear Colleagues,

Parliaments and their respective committees have a pivotal role to play in promoting and safeguarding respect of human rights, not only in their countries, but also around the world through their multiple cooperation. Allow me to briefly inform you of what the House Standing Committee on Human Rights of the Cyprus Parliament is doing in this respect.

The Committee exercises scrutiny with regard to human rights problems, and proceeds to the preparation of relevant legislation and other measures safeguarding human rights, by means of public hearings and meetings with experts, civil society and other relevant organisations. Moreover, the Committee promotes the ratification of international agreements pertaining to the protection of human rights, and to this end, one of its main responsibilities is to examine and investigate the compliance of the Republic with international conventions ratified by the House of Representatives.

Also, the Committee occasionally visits homes for the elderly people, nurseries, centers for asylum seekers, state detention centres and facilities, to ensure that the necessary legislative and other measures are implemented with respect to human rights. Particular attention is paid to detainees daily living conditions, social environment and access to medical treatment. Follow-up action with regard to the compliance of the executive with legislation adopted or suggestions submitted is closely monitored by the Committee.

The Parliament in close cooperation with the Government is doing its utmost in an effort to improve Cyprus' effective respect for human rights in fields including among others the administration of justice, the situation in prisons, the conduct of the police, and human rights related to immigrants. Cyprus, as a democratic country, wishes to improve weaknesses pertaining to human rights of all people living in Cyprus.

The Republic of Cyprus dear colleagues, is very sensitive in the field of respect of human rights, as it is a country, suffering from the ongoing violation of human rights of all Cypriots, as a result of the 1974 invasion and continuing military occupation of 37% of its territory. The fact that the people of Cyprus are victims of violations of human rights, is been repeatedly established by numerous UN resolutions and several times by the European Court of Human Rights. Until this day and over the last 33 years, resolutions and decisions adopted by international organizations and bodies on the violation of human rights in Cyprus remain unimplemented.

The continuing violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Cypriots as evidenced by the different judgements, decisions and resolutions concern among others the issues of missing persons and their relatives, the home and property rights of displaced persons, the living conditions of Greek-Cypriots in the occupied northern part of Cyprus and the implantation of approximately 160.000 Turkish settlers who have been deliberately brought from Turkey in the occupied area, in order to change the demographic composition of the island.

The resolution of the Cyprus problem is a priority for the Cyprus government. Any settlement of the problem must be based on international law, the pertinent UN resolutions, the principles of the European Union and the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. Only if a future settlement of the Cyprus Question comprises respect of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots can be functional, viable and sustainable.

Dear colleagues,

We should all work together, exchange views, experiences and best practices in an effective manner, and under a parliamentary network, in order to create a coherent human rights policy. Strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights not only in our countries but also throughout the world, and turning in this way our expectations into reality, is our common duty as parliamentarians and as elected representatives of our peoples.

Thank you.