



National Federation of Cypriots in the UK

Εθνική Κυπριακή Ομοσπονδία Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου

Working for a Free, United Cyprus

Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP
Minister of State for Europe and the Americas
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London, SW1A 2AH

15 May 2019

Dear Minister

I'm writing to you following your response to an oral question by Bambos Charalambous MP regarding Turkey's illegal incursion into the Republic of Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone ("EEZ"), in Foreign Office Questions on Tuesday 14 May. In the response, you said "The position of the UK is that, in line with the UN convention on the law of the sea, exploratory drilling should not proceed in any area where sovereignty is under dispute".

In our correspondence on 8th March 2018, regarding the illegal incursion into Cyprus' EEZ last year by Turkey, you said not only that Her Majesty's Government ("HMG") recognises the right of the Republic of Cyprus to exploit its natural resources in its EEZ, but also that the "we [the UK] want to see exploration go ahead".

In addition, in response to a question from the Cyprus News Agency, the British High Commission in Nicosia, said that the UK "agrees" with the EU's High Representative statement (on behalf of the EU) on 4th May that was re-iterated on 13 May where Ms Mogherini said:

"I expressed on behalf of the European Union grave concern on the intention to carry out drilling activities within the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus and the strong condemnation that we already expressed in March last year of Turkey's continued illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean. We call urgently on Turkey to show restraint, and respect for the sovereign rights of Cyprus in its Exclusive Economic Zone and refrain from any such illegal action to which the European Union will respond appropriately and in full solidarity with Cyprus."

Therefore, whilst I welcome the subsequent clarification that Mike Freer MP sought, I'm afraid that the response to Bambos Charalambous MP and subsequent Foreign & Commonwealth Office statement, as it stands, is politically and legally unacceptable. The statement has left our

President: Christos Karaolis • E-mail: christos.karaolis@cyriotfederation.org.uk

Vice-Presidents: Bambos Charalambous, Michael Ellinas, Andreas Papaevripides • General Secretary: Michael Kashis • Treasurer: Ninos Koumettou • Executive Secretary: Andreas Karaolis

Members of the Executive Committee: Susie Constantinides, Andreas Gregoriou, Yiannis Koumettou, Menicos Kouvaros, Antonia Michaelides, Marios Minaides, Neophytos Nicolaou

A complete list of member organisations and the names of all of the current officers and members of the Secretariat of the Federation can be found on the Federation's website.

National Federation of Cypriots in the UK, Britannia Road, London, N12 9RU • Tel: 020 8445 9999

E-mail: enquiries@cyriotfederation.org.uk • www.cyriotfederation.org.uk

community deeply disappointed and it prima facie appears to signal a shift in HMG policy. I hope that this is not the case. In line with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus is not under any dispute or in question. Turkey is attempting to drill in an area of the Republic of Cyprus' EEZ that has already been delineated with Egypt and has been accepted by the United Nations. The Republic of Cyprus has on multiple occasions, invited the Republic of Turkey to meet and delineate the Exclusive Economic Zones of the two countries, however sadly, Turkey declined. Instead Turkey has chosen to engage in unilateral illegal actions.

As the FCO said in the subsequent clarification to Mike Freer MP, the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus is internationally agreed. Moreover, legally permitted licenses have been issued to US (ExxonMobil), French (TOTAL) and Italian (ENI) energy companies that have begun exploratory activities. On behalf of our community, I would welcome an urgent clarification regarding:

- Which areas of the Republic of Cyprus' EEZ, as you alluded to, does Her Majesty's Government recognise as "disputed" and by whom?
- If, contrary to the Republic of Cyprus' internationally agreed EEZ, Turkey chooses to dispute a part of the EEZ, should this prevent the Republic of Cyprus from exercising its sovereign right to explore and exploit its natural resources?

In addition, we urge Her Majesty's Government to both publicly and privately call on Turkey to remove its drilling vessels and warships from the Republic of Cyprus' EEZ and to take action to ensure that this happens. The Labour Party, Scottish National Party, as well as individual Parliamentarians (including Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale MP, Bambos Charalambous MP, Matthew Offord MP, Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, Julian Knight MP and Catherine West MP) have all condemned Turkey's illegal incursion and called on Turkey to respect the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus and immediately withdraw its drilling vessels and warships from Cyprus' EEZ.

The Republic of Cyprus remains a steadfast ally of the United Kingdom, both in the Commonwealth and in the EU, especially over the last two years during the Brexit negotiations. Furthermore, successful implementation of Cyprus' energy programme is very much in the UK's national interest, as it is critical to safeguarding and diversifying the future energy security of both the UK and Europe. In contrast, Turkey has been actively undermining the Western security system over recent years and has proven itself an unstable and unpredictable ally in NATO.

Therefore, it is deeply disappointing and disturbing that our Government is not clearly standing up for the Republic of Cyprus, while at the same time HMG Ministers continually emphasise the UK's adherence to the rules based international order and that the UK will become the invisible chain connecting democracies worldwide, post-Brexit. We expect that this pledge will be upheld in the case of Republic of Cyprus' sovereign rights in its declared and undisputed EEZ.

On behalf of our UK Cypriot community, we urge you to rapidly reconsider. As this issue is of deep concern to our community in the UK, this letter is being published.

I look forward to your response.



Christos Karaolis
President
On behalf of the Secretariat