

ΕΓΓΡΑΦΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ

Τίτλος εγγράφου: The view of young people on the issue of Cyprus and how to achieve a better Cyprus¹

Οργάνωση/σεις: ΥΕΥ Cyprus

Ημερομηνία υποβολής:

Περίληψη – εισαγωγή: (120 – 150 λέξεις):

Negotiations about the Cyprus Issue go on for decades and a lot of effort has been made to achieve a solution. Yet, the ones who will live throughout the solution in the island, the young people, are never considered as stakeholders or being asked about their opinion. Such approach counteracts the UN Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security² which recognizes the significant role young people can play in achieving peace and security. Therefore, the Security Council urges Member States to consider ways of including youth in decision-making processes at local, regional, national and international level. Furthermore, the resolution recognizes the “important and positive contribution of youth in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security”, and it “affirms the important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts”.

The purpose of this policy paper is to advocate for incorporating the recommendations of young people from different groups and communities in Cyprus concerning the Cyprus Issue, taking into consideration the peacebuilding efforts that are currently taking place with the leaders of the two main communities of the island. It also seeks to provide practical suggestions for improvements which can be introduced to shape a peaceful future in Cyprus. Specifically, it will recommend actions to be taken on different levels: Government, Administration, Civil Society and Media in different fields.

¹ The opinions presented in this paper reflect the findings of the conferences: “Better Cyprus” which was held in March 2017 and “Better Cyprus Extended” which was held in October 2017 with the participation of 18- 30 years old youngsters. The conference took place under the Erasmus + program and is part of the Basic Action 3: Supporting Policy Reforms.

² Resolution 2250 (2015) Adopted by the Security Council at its 7573rd meeting, on 9 December 2015

Θέσεις πολιτικής:

Peace Education:

- Involve young people in decision making processes and promote transparency in interpreting the political discussions, by creating an online platform for collecting public opinions on issues that are currently on the political agenda.
- Both communities should cooperate to organize student exchanges in collaboration with schools. During these exchanges students from community A will be hosted by community B and vice-versa. Student exchanges will boost mutual learning to build stable communication, common understanding; and prove that co-existence is possible.
- Introduce compulsory Greek and Turkish lessons in schools (primary, secondary and high school), to overcome the fear of the unknown and establish communication.
- Introduce/develop and empower critical thinking, active citizenship, increase self- confidence and include non-formal education activities on matters of teamwork, human rights, innovation and creativity. These activities should be included in the educational system to promote understanding and communication.
- Promote the institution of foster families by sending Greek Cypriot children to live for a specific period (i.e. one month) with a Turkish Cypriot family and vice versa, to understand the similarities and boost understanding. This can be done with the cooperation of the Government/Administration and NGOs.
- Publish one common history book which promotes a shared history, reconciliation, common understanding and focuses on peace. It should be written by an objective multicultural committee consisting of academics and historians; but also, collaborators from local NGOs and private stakeholders.
- Introduce teacher training in history studying and teaching.

Bicommunal Corporation:

- Both communities should work, separately and together, in improving the conditions of discriminated groups within the society, such as ethnic minorities. The government/administration should listen to their voices more, through meeting them and their representatives in person.

- Establish a bi-communal environmental protection office, to encourage throughout the island a common understanding that we live in the same island and share the same nature.
- Promote and strengthen cooperation on a local administrative level (e.g. municipalities) to confront common problems: fields of water, electricity and agriculture.
- Develop and integrate a transportation system to connect the whole island.
- Organize and develop common festivals and bi-communal activities (i.e. wine festivals, strawberry festivals, about traditional food, hiking, basketry, sports etc.) aiming to share and empower common cultural values with participants from both communities. They can be organized by associations, NGOs, councils and groups of people.
- Create an Eco Village, for people from both communities. Where they could live there for a specific amount of time aiming to prove that coexistence and cooperation is possible. The idea is for people to cultivate the earth without chemicals and use the money to support their families. This village may be established in Famagusta and can be created by NGOs.

Media:

- Create TV channels, newspapers and social media pages that share the news, events and entertainment programmes from both communities as objectively as possible, for viewers to have the chance to know the news from the whole island.