

- Real security and cultural threats faced by the Turkish Cypriot community on a Greek Cypriot dominated island (rooted in not so distant history - ENOSIS, unilateral actions of the Greek Cypriots who claim to represent the entire island, etc.)

Four themes dominated the closing discussion in Larnaka: the role of Turkey, EU accession, possible next steps, and the role of the international community and Canada in a solution of the Cyprus problem.

The Role of Turkey

Some participants suggested that the key to solution of the Cyprus problem is currently in the hands of the Turkish government in Ankara. The firm position Mr. Denktash has adopted is supported by the Turkish government, which backs the Turkish Cypriot side with a large army. A point was made that it is, in fact, the Turkish government which holds the strings in northern Cyprus, rather than Mr. Denktash and his followers. Moreover, some argued that while the presence of the Turkish army in Cyprus is justified on the grounds of protecting the Turkish Cypriot minority, it is in Turkey's national interest as well.

Political initiatives should be directed towards Ankara and the Turkish people.

Especially effective would be efforts made to promote democracy in Turkey and Turkey's accession to the EU. The international community should support liberal, progressive and pro-European elements of the Turkish society. Once Turkey becomes a solid liberal democracy and a part of Europe, its government will cease destabilising the region and acting in a unilateral way. Undoubtedly, joining Europe will require the Turkish government to change its policy toward Cyprus as well. There can be no movement on the Cyprus issue without creating a cost to Turkey. UN Resolutions and the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights should be enforced.

However, the question on "which door to knock" in order to influence Turkish position was raised. There are many actors in Ankara who wish to maintain the status quo and do not wish to move on either Cyprus policy or EU accession. "The carrot of the EU" is by no means a certainty.

EU Accession

According to one participant, the Turkish Cypriot fear of the Greek majority is a phobia, since it is not rooted in reality. She argued that all insecurities of the Turkish Cypriots have been addressed by the Greek side. Moreover, "the Greek Cypriots would not jeopardise their accession to the EU by mistreating the Turkish Cypriot minority." One should also think about "the fear 600 000 Greeks may feel facing 60 million Turks." Some added that the psychological factors inherent within the Cyprus problem, including the insecurity of the Turkish Cypriot minority, would be effectively resolved by EU accession.

Others pointed out that EU accession would not dismiss the fears of Turkish Cypriots.