

- insistence on unanimity in all matters has usually tended to produce impasses and deadlocks
- there is no opportunity for shifting alliances and coalitions that enable multi-unit federations to resolve stand-offs
- challenges are often reduced to a zero-sum game (every issue is seen in terms of a winner and a loser)

A possible solution is to convert two unit entities into multi-unit federations. Where not possible, federalism could be combined with confederal elements (i.e., unanimity on some agreed fundamental matters). Canada has implemented both solutions in the past.

Ronald Watts drew attention to the importance of supportive civil societies. He said that creating federal or confederal structures is not a panacea. **The experience of Canada and other federations and confederations indicates that even more important than their formal structures has been public acceptance of basic values and processes required for their operation.** Multiple identities within an overarching sense of shared purposes and objectives have to be explicitly recognised and accommodated. Essential for Canada and others has been the acceptance of diversity, tolerance, compromise and a sense of trust. The question is how to achieve these conditions when they do not exist. Undoubtedly, creating them would be a long term, step by step process. When conditions lack, other solutions, including a separation, may have to be considered.

Conditions for conflict resolution do not seem to exist presently in Cyprus. Nonetheless, there are some relevant examples from around the world where deadlock was broken, including the unification of South Africa and even European integration. These cases demonstrate several important lessons:

- the value of a grand gesture to transform attitudes
- the importance of a concession from the majority, but also from the other side
- the need for each side to think not just of its own interests and needs but also of the interests and needs of the other side
- unless each side sees gains, an acceptable solution is unlikely to be found.

In Cyprus, the issues of EU membership and of Greece-Turkey relations may contribute to breaking the impasse. There may be room for a watershed gesture (action) in this context.

Federation or Confederation?

Toumazos Tselepis (Committee of the National Council) expressed his strong support for a federal solution. He suggested that a federation is a mean between centripetal and centrifugal forces because it averts partition, on the one hand, and offers each community broad autonomy, on the other. Moreover, according to Toumazos Tselepis, a federation would:

- respect both, the communities as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- contribute to a harmonious coexistence of the two communities,
- contribute to normalisations of Greek-Turkish relations,