
Cyprus 2015 - research and dialogue for a sustainable future

May 2009 - The Cyprus conflict remains one of the long-lasting unresolved issues of the international community. Dozens of UN Security Council resolutions and conflict-resolution efforts have addressed the Cyprus issue over the past four decades but have proved unable to resolve the problem. The Interpeace initiative, 'Cyprus 2015', went live on the 1st May and is being implemented by the Joint Programme Unit for United Nations/Interpeace Initiatives (JPU).

UN asked Interpeace to explore feasibility

The initial invitation for the initiative came from the former Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, and UNDP's Action for Cooperation and Trust programme in Cyprus in 2006. They invited the Joint Programme Unit for UN/Interpeace Initiatives (JPU) to explore if the Interpeace approach would be appropriate to address some of the issues relating to the Cyprus "frozen" conflict which go back more than half a century. The thorough consultation process that followed confirmed that the Interpeace approach would add value.

Initiative to engage all levels of society

As an operational arm of the UN for peacebuilding projects in the field, the JPU will be supporting the programme in partnership with UNDP. This inter-communal programme will bring together and actively engage local communities, civil society groups and the political elite from both sides.

Political support received

The initiative has secured the political and written support from both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaderships:

"Given that the project sustains its objectivity, impartiality and professional quality, I am optimistic that it can have a positive impact on the efforts aiming to the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem." Greek Cypriot leadership

"I would like to express my sincere hope that the Interpeace programme, will be successful and positively contribute to our mutual aim of finding an urgent settlement to this long-overdue problem." Turkish Cypriot leadership

One programme, one goal, one team

The Cyprus 2015 initiative will be implemented by a bi-communal team over the next 18 months. Made up of Greek

Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, they are already working in close collaboration on this integrated programme that has one clear, shared goal. As always with the Interpeace approach, the teams are 100% local. This ensures that there is local ownership while they draw on international best practice.

Re-engaging both communities and promoting understanding

The programme has one clear goal - to re-engage both communities at all levels in the peace process. Specific outcomes include:

- A better informed public debate that relies on objective information
- More fluid channels of communication between the leadership and the general public.
- A better informed policy-making process
- Improved awareness, understanding and trust within and across the two communities

The project will make extensive use of a series of research and dialogue tools to catalyze constructive dialogue between all groups.

'Peace polling' a key component

As the final details of this research and dialogue programme are being confirmed a first opinion poll is being put in place to measure the current attitude towards the peace process from both sides.