

DEAR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

SINCE THEIR INITIAL ESTABLISHMENT ON THE 30TH OF OCTOBER 1960 THE BULGARIAN-CYPRIOT RELATIONS HAVE DEVELOPED STEADILY IN A FRIENDLY MANNER AND A CLOSE COLLABORATION. UP TO NOW MUTUAL TRUST, STRIVE TOWARDS CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE, ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND COMMON FOREIGN-POLITICAL PRIORITIES HAVE BEEN THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.



On the 16th of August 1960 the Republic of Cyprus was announced an independent state. The Bulgarian government recognized this act and stated its good will to establish diplomatic relations. Talks for regulating the bilateral ties were held (25-30 October 1960) by the official of the Bulgarian legacy in Greece at that time Kosta Lambrev. They were closed with the signing of a common official statement for instituting diplomatic relations at the rank of embassies. In 1961 in Nicosia a diplomatic office was opened, headed by Kosta Ananiev. On the 1st of April 1970 Nikos Kranidiotis, the first ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus in Bulgaria with head office in Athens, handed over his letter of credence. In 1971 in Nicosia the first Bulgarian embassy was opened headed by His Excellency Konstantin Popov.

After the events of 1974 Cyprus was actually divided. In 1975 the North part of the island (37% of the country's territory) was announced a Turkish-Cypriot Federative Republic and on the 15th of November 1983 a North Cypriot-Turkish Republic, recognized only by Turkey. Three days later the Bulgarian government promulgated a declaration by which it expressed its explicit disagreement with the unilaterally proclaimed North Cypriot-Turkish Republic. Its position has remained unchanged up to this day.

In the bilateral relations with Cyprus Bulgaria has strived to apply the following priorities: support of active political dialogue at summit and high level, establishment of close cooperation between the specialized ministries of both countries and increase of stock exchange and tourist stream.

Among the aims of the diplomatic cooperation are also the intensive cultural and educational exchange, the intensifying of the cooperation with Cyprus in the European institutions and the up-date of the contractual-legal basis in conformity with the European standards.

The visit of the Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov in October 2009 was in return of the visit of the President Dimitris Christofias in Sofia in October 2008. The Presiding Chairwoman of the National Assembly Mrs. Tsetska Tsacheva took part in the annual meeting of the Chairmen of parliaments within the frame of PACE (10.06.-13.06.20120). On the 12th of December 2011 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus Erato Markuli came on an official visit to Bulgaria at the invitation of Minister Nikolay Mladenov.

A substantial contractual-legal basis has been set up between the two countries with over 30 bilateral agreements.

Continuous efforts are being made to bring it up-to-date with the European standards. Among the most important agreements are: the Agreement for avoiding the double taxation of incomes and properties of the citizens of both countries from the year 2000; the Agreement for cooperation in the struggle against terrorism, drugs illegal traffic and organized crime from 2002; the Agreement for social securities from 2006; the Protocol for intense cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Cyprus from 2008; the Common Declaration for Cooperation between the Bulgarian National Securities Institute and the Securities Direction of Cyprus for exchange of experts/employees visits from both institutions as well as the Memorandum for exchange of employees of the diplomatic services from 2011.

Over the last few years the trade-economic relations between Bulgaria and Cyprus have been intensively developed. Cyprus is one of the leading investment partners of

Bulgaria. For the period 1996 – 2010 Cyprus was ranked 6th in making foreign investments in Bulgaria and left behind countries like Hungary, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Ireland, France and Spain. For 2010 Cyprus was ranked 50th in the total goods exchange with Bulgaria with a share of 0,2 % of the total exchange, with 0,29% - 42nd in export and with 0,14% - 48th of the total import.

In the last years a trend of intense interest in tourism between Bulgaria and Cyprus has been observed. The number of Bulgarian tourists who visited Cyprus is much higher than the number of Cypriots who stayed in Bulgaria.

The opportunities for Cypriot investments in Bulgaria are more than those for Bulgarian investments in Cyprus. The interest of Cypriot investors could be focused on direct privatization deals, auction participation, projects, concessions, setting up of joint-venture companies for production, work on cut-and-make basis, know-how or copy rights transfer in order to penetrate markets of third countries. Of mutual interest are mainly agreements in the light industry, the shoe manufacturing, the textile industry, the production of electrical appliances, the production of goods made of crystal, porcelain, furniture, the hotel and office equipment manufacturing as well as in the food industry – production of juices and concentrates of citrus fruits, tomato concentrate, the wine industry, etc. In addition there is also the opportunity to attract potential Cypriot tourists in Bulgaria and particularly for winter ski, balneological, ecological and hunting tourism.

From 1981 until 1991 Bulgaria had its own cultural institute in Nicosia. Then the cultural ties between the two countries were activated. Because of economic reasons in 1991 the Bulgarian cultural Institute in the Cypriot capital was closed. The Cypriot side repeatedly raised the question of its re-opening at various levels. The refusal of the Bulgarian side was based entirely on financial reasons, and not on diplomatic ones.

The first Bulgarian newspaper –under the name “The Bulgarian Newspaper” was published in Cyprus in 2006 and has been in circulation up to now. In November 2010 there were 3 Bulgarian media in Cyprus.

Up to 2011 there were 7 mainly Saturday-Sunday Bulgarian Schools in Cyprus based in Nicosia, Larnaka, Limassol, Pafos, Paralimni, Polis and Pisuri. The Agreement for cooperation between the governments of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cyprus in the fields of science, culture and education and the three-years long programmes that go along with it are the fundamentals on which the excellent relations between the two countries are being developed in these fields. Cyprus is an extremely important partner for Bulgaria not only in the bilateral relations in the field of culture but also in the cooperation within the frame of the EU, in the Council of Europe and in UNESCO. The common geographical situation, the common historical

background, the similar cultural and cultural-historical heritage as well as orthodoxy are preconditions for the close relations of the two nations.