

Speech by H.E. the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus Mr. Stavros Amvrosiou on the occasion of the National Day Reception to mark the 52nd Anniversary since the Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus

Varna, September 29th, 2012



Уважаеми приятели,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Guests,

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our National Day Reception hosted today to mark the 52nd Anniversary since the Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus.

Cyprus was proclaimed an independent State on the 16th of August 1960. However, the Independence Day is celebrated on the 1st of October.

The people of Cyprus won their independence after a long anti-colonial struggle against the British rule. It was a conditional independence, as it was imposed under coercion and without the consent of the people of Cyprus.

In 1974, following a short-lived military coup against the President Archbishop Makarios, organized by the military Junta ruling Greece at the time, Turkish troops invaded the island's northern part. As a result of the invasion, 37% of the territory of Cyprus was occupied by the Turkish army, one third of the population was forcibly expelled from their homes and properties, and became refugees (including myself), thousands of people were killed, while hundreds of families are still waiting for the ascertainment of the fate of the missing persons. In spite of repeated UN resolutions, Turkey stubbornly refuses to withdraw its troops from Cyprus.

The problem of Cyprus is not a problem between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. It is a problem between the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkey because of the Invasion of 1974 and the continuing occupation.

In the past, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots used to live peacefully and work harmoniously together without problems.

The solution to the Cyprus problem is easy. Turkey should leave the two communities alone and should stop its interference in the internal affairs of Cyprus, withdraw its occupation troops and settlers.

Today Cyprus is a modern developed country and belongs to the big European Family of Nations, member of the European Union since May 1st, 2004 as it is our host country Bulgaria since January 1st, 2007. As you know Cyprus assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second part of this year. It is an honour for Cyprus and a great challenge but also a unique opportunity for Cyprus to make a lasting contribution towards European Integration, while, also enhancing its image as a credible and responsible member.

The Cyprus Presidency is currently working Towards a Better Europe, a Union more relevant to its citizens and the world.

The Cyprus Presidency is acting as an honest broker, aiming to achieve progress and successfully reach agreements on several issues, particularly regarding the budget of the Union for the years 2014-2020.

At this point, I would like to stress that Bulgaria was among the first countries to recognize the Independence of Cyprus and this year marks the 52nd Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cyprus and Bulgaria.

Cyprus and Bulgaria have maintained excellent relations all those years. Long friendly ties connect the two countries and peoples not only at the political and diplomatic level but also at the historical and cultural level. Many Cypriots have graduated from Bulgarian Universities. Also the economic relations have developed a

lot in recent years. Almost 30,000 Bulgarians live and work in Cyprus at the moment. They have become part of our life and they contribute to our society and economy.

Finally, I would like to express my warm thanks to the Cypriot businessman Mr. Christoforos Violaris, who is the co-host and sponsor of this reception and without his generous contribution this might not have taken place.

Welcome everybody. I wish you have a pleasant time. . Enjoy the cultural programme which will follow. A folklore group will entertain you with Cypriot and Bulgarian songs and dances. Enjoy the Cyprus delicacies.

Thank you for your presence, thank you for being with us tonight.

Желая Ви приятна вечер.