



**Statement by the Representative of the Permanent Mission of Türkiye
1066th Plenary Meeting of Forum for Security Cooperation
Opening Session, 17 January 2024**

I would like to start by underlining that Türkiye attaches utmost importance to the FSC and its *acquis*.

Achievements of the FSC certainly contribute to the overall success of the OSCE.

Chairpersonship of this body requires utmost responsibility, vigilance, professionalism, as well as impartiality on behalf of all Participating States.

Previously, our well-known position in that regard has been openly and persistently conveyed to the FSC Chairpersonships.

Finally, let me remind that the Turkish delegation participates in all OSCE meetings, including the FSC sessions, in line with its Formal Reservation CSCE/III/1 dated 31 July 1975.

Thank you.

Right of Reply

Frankly speaking, I am surprised with such pre-coordinated overreaction by the Greek Cypriot and EU delegations.

In our preliminary statement on principles, we did not refer to any contentious matter, but only underlined our formal reservation, which was distributed in 1975. This reservation clearly defines the conditions for our participation in the OSCE meetings.

However, while it was not our primary intention, after listening to the claims by the Greek Cypriot and EU delegations, I am also compelled to make some brief remarks on the Cyprus issue.

Indeed, what we are saying will again be compatible with our formal reservation and it is not necessary to explain the background of a concrete document which was circulated 50 years ago, and it was not necessary to make a right of reply by two previous delegations regarding that document.

Against this backdrop and despite our constructive approach with a very careful language, we note with regret the baseless insinuations in the previous statements. We oppose and object to such defamation attempts *in toto*.

In light of our formal reservation, I would like to stress that the true addressee of the Greek Cypriot representatives are their counterparts in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

However, since Turkish Cypriots are not represented here in the OSCE, let me make some short remarks on their behalf, to make their voices heard.

First, the Cyprus problem is not an issue of “invasion” or “occupation”, as maliciously insinuated.

The division of the Island began in 1963, much earlier than 1974, when the Greek Cypriots expelled the Turkish Cypriots from the partnership state organs and institutions as well as from their homes, in violation of the Treaties of 1960 and all human rights norms.

Due to time restrictions, I will not go into detail about the armed ethnic cleansing campaign against the Turkish Cypriots and the coup d'état carried out by the Junta in 1974 aiming at annexing the Island to Greece, which left Türkiye with no other option but to exercise its rights stemming from the Treaty of Guarantee.

The root cause of the Cyprus issue is the intransigent mindset of the Greek Cypriots, who see Turkish Cypriots, the co-owners of the Island, as a minority and refuse to treat them as equal partners.

The Greek Cypriot side does not want to share political power and wealth, including the Island's natural resources with the Turkish Cypriots.

Indeed, this fact lies behind the failure of all negotiations since 1968.

As a stark example, one should bear in mind that it was the Greek Cypriot side who rejected the solution in the Annan Plan in 2004 and left the table at the Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana in 2017.

Here, I would like to particularly remind that separate simultaneous referenda were held in Cyprus Island on 24 April 2004 regarding the UN Secretary-General Annan's Comprehensive Settlement Plan, where overwhelming majority (65 per cent) of the Turkish Cypriots voted in favor. However, the Greek Cypriots rejected it with a 75 per cent majority. These referenda, as Greek Cypriots rejected the unification of the island, underlined the fact that there exist two separate peoples on the island, neither of which represents the other. There are also two states on the island. This is the undeniable reality on the ground.

The Turkish Cypriot side wants to establish a cooperative relationship between the two states in Cyprus Island.

They submitted a written proposal at the informal 5+UN meeting in Geneva [27-29 April 2021], based on the facts on the Island.

The essence of the proposal is to reaffirm the inherent sovereign equality and equal international status of the Turkish Cypriot people.

This is the Turkish Cypriots' vision, which is fully supported by Türkiye.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that our intention was not to talk about this contentious matter. However, the reaction of the Greek Cypriot delegation to our initial statement, which was nothing more than a mere definition of the well-known conditions of our participation in the OSCE meetings, with the backing of the EU delegation, compelled us to provide further clarification regarding our stance.

Thank you.
