

## **The Cyprus example-working together,Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, for the protection of our common heritage**

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Firstly, I would like to thank Edirne Municipality, Nur Akın and Nevzat İlhan for their warm hospitality and excellent organisation of this meeting.

It is very important for us Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots that we have the opportunity to inform you of the positive and constructive work that is being done jointly in Cyprus concerning the protection of our common cultural heritage.

The cooperation of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is not new of course, my colleague Ilkay Feridun will tell you a few words on the work that she has been involved in for the last thirty years regarding the Nicosia Master Plan.

I will talk about the work of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage that myself and Emine Pili are involved in.

In April 2008 bi-communal Working Groups and Technical Committees were formed to help prepare the ground, via confidence building measures, for direct talks between the two Leaders of the two communities (Mr. Christofias and Mr. Talat). One such Committee is the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage.

The mandate of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage includes subjects under three main axes:

*(i) Establishment of an effective mechanism for the physical protection and restoration of the broader cultural heritage on the island (religious sites, art, monuments, antiquities, cemeteries, etc.),*

*(ii) Cooperation on the prevention of smuggling of antiquities and cultural artifacts,*

*(iii) Development of attitudes of respect for cultural heritage through the development of educational projects.*

Since the establishment of the Committee in April 2008 until today four main decisions have been announced:

1. The creation of an Education Program in the form of an interactive CD-Rom
2. The Pilot Project for the Restoration of two monuments- a church in the north and a mosque in the south.
3. The establishment of a Comprehensive Inventory of Immovable Cultural Heritage for the whole of Cyprus.
4. The establishment of an Advisory Board for the Preservation, Physical Protection and Restoration of the Immovable Cultural Heritage of Cyprus.

The Committee has agreed on a common priority list of monuments and studies have begun for their restoration proposals.

We are also currently working on establishing ways to move forward with the physical restoration projects .

We are very happy to represent Cyprus here today as one team working together for our common cultural heritage.