

BLUE BERET

SUMMER 2022



**UNFICYP marks International
Day of Peacekeepers**

**UNFICYP Civil Affairs lead
initiatives to bring communities together**

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 | SRSG meetings with the diplomatic community
- 5 | SRSG outreach with Cypriots across the divide
- 6 | UNFICYP marks International Day of Peacekeepers
- 7 | Force Commander visits sectors
- 8 | New bi-communal youth group steps up collaboration between scientists across the island
- 9 | Abandoned dog learns how to “woof again” after being rescued by UNPOL
- 10 | Opening of the Pyla/Pile Joint Contact Room
- 11 | Peacekeepers awarded UN peace medals
- 12 | “Peace must be cultivated; we need to work for it everyday”
- 13 | “Women were, are and will always be needed to bring communities together”
- 14 | UNFICYP Civil Affairs lead initiatives to bringing the communities together
- 15 | Business and Networking Fair inside UN buffer zone brings communities together



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Editor's note

Dear readers, with the arrival of summer in Cyprus we have the pleasure to launch the latest edition of the Blue Beret magazine covering the highlights of the Mission during the second quarter of 2022. As we gear up for the renewal of UNFICYP's mandate in July for a further six months, this edition comes as an important reminder of our continued efforts to prevent tensions, maintain calm across the buffer zone and work to build trust between the communities across the island.

In this edition, we cover SRSG Colin Stewart's meetings with key stakeholders, including his meetings with the leaders, the launch of an Action Plan on gender and his several meetings with civil society representatives and with Technical Committees. Encouragingly, UNFICYP's efforts to engage with civil society groups from both sides of the island continue to grow with an increasing number of virtual and in person activities, events and meetings being organised by our colleagues in Civil Affairs. We are also pleased to share photos of a recent visit from Ben Fogle, who is filming an episode about Cyprus for a series for the UK's Channel 5.

We also celebrated World Environment Day in early June, by highlighting efforts UNFICYP is taking with all its components to prevent hunting, bird trapping and other illegal activities that threaten the ecosystem across the buffer zone.

You will also find several stories on some of the initiatives led by our Civil Affairs colleagues, including some motivated young people who are taking part in the Young Leaders in Action programme and some of the women who recently graduated from a mindful leadership project, who are coming together to bridge the gap between the communities.

In this edition, we also include coverage of our most recent medal ceremonies and the work our peacekeepers are doing inside the buffer zone. Finally, you will also find some examples of the great work being done by our colleagues, from generous blood donations from our Slovak peacekeepers to dog rescue by our UNPOL officers, and highlights of International Day of Peacekeepers and the first business and networking fair held inside the buffer zone.

In the next few pages, read about how UNFICYP continues support the communities we serve.

Enjoy reading!



BLUE BERET
Summer 2022

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SRSB meetings with the diplomatic community



On 4 April, with the Chargé d'affaires of the Vatican, Monsignor George Panamthundil.



On 7 April, SRSB Colin Stewart, attended a panel discussion to launch the new Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network report at the University of Nicosia.



On 3 May, with the Junior Deputy Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, Martin Košatka, accompanied by Ambassador Vladimír Němec.



On 9 May, Stewart met with the Ambassador of Norway, Frode Overland Andersen.



On 11 May, with the Ambassador of USA, Judith Garber, and her delegation.



On 17 June, with the Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Faramarz Jannati.

SRSG outreach with Cypriots from across the divide

On 13 April, the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar, attended the official launch of an action plan on ways to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the settlement process /an eventual settlement process in Cyprus, in the United Nations Protected Area, under the auspices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus, Colin Stewart.

Stewart stated in his remarks: "The Action Plan was developed by the Technical Committee on Gender Equality in response to the United Nations Security Council's call creates a plan to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation and is based on international best practices and builds on the principles of United Nations Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and Security."



On 14 May, SRSG Colin Stewart, attended the 10+1 anniversary of the Home for Cooperation. The space, opened in 2011, is a unique community centre located in the Ledra Palace area, inside the buffer zone in Nicosia and it has become a landmark, acting as a bridge-builder between the communities through its physical presence and its peacebuilding programmes.

On 15 June, SRSG Colin Stewart met with members of the Technical Committee on Education to discuss the successes and challenges of their work. He was very impressed with the implementation of the IMAGINE project by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research under the auspices of the Technical Committee.



On 21 June, SRSG Colin Stewart met with the members of the Technical Committees on Crisis Management and on Crossing Points at Ledra Palace Hotel.

UNFICYP marks International Day of Peacekeepers

On 29 May, UNPOL celebrated International Day of Peacekeepers, and the power of partnerships, with Cypriots at Ledra Street in Nicosia. We celebrate all our peacekeepers for their service for peace in Cyprus and around the world.



On 27 May, SRSG Colin Stewart, briefed staff on recent developments during a townhall to mark peacekeepers day. The day offers an opportunity to pay tribute to the contributions of uniformed and civilian personnel to the work of the Organization, and to honour more than 4,000 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the flag since 1948.



Force Commander visits sectors

On 18 May, UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, and the Ambassador of Slovakia, Martin Bezák, visited peacekeepers in sector 4 for a briefing on the area.



On 30 May, 46 peacekeepers from Slovakia donated blood at local health centres in Paralimni, Nicosia and Famagusta in solidarity to those in need. We are proud of them for supporting the communities we serve.



On 31 May, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, welcomed to the United Nations Protected Area, the Chief of the Crisis Management Centre of Slovakia Armed Forces, Brigadier General Martin Remeš.



On 7 June, UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde visited peacekeepers in sector 2 for a briefing about the area. Sector 2 is the responsibility of the British contingent who patrols and monitors activity in over 30 kilometres along the United Nations buffer zone, beginning at the east end of Mammari village and ending at the village of Kaimakli to the east of Nicosia, Cyprus.



On 16 June, UNFICYP's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde, accompanied by the Commander of the Ground Forces of the Slovak Republic, Major General Ivan Pach, visited 13 mechanized battalion in Levice, in Slovakia, where training of military personnel takes place before deployment to UNFICYP.



New bi-communal youth group steps up collaboration between scientists across the island

Ayse Biyikoglu is a very active young Cypriot who finds time on her tight schedule as a PhD student in Psychology to promote the participation of women and young people in different social arenas. Realizing the lack of women and youth's participation in key decision-making spaces, Ayse decided to engage in discussions on the subject and likes to say that she participates in all available and related projects.

"Our platform will cultivate scientific bi-communal dialogue, bridge the gap between the public and academia, and amplify the voices of women and youth in the research arena."

She joined the "Young Leaders in Action" programme "to gain knowledge and raise awareness of the lack of women and youth in the peacebuilding process based in Cyprus," Ayse highlights. She describes the UN initiative as a very important one since she met with many new peers from across the island and got involved in discussions on new ideas and approaches on the equal and just participation of women and young people in various social action projects. Furthermore, her participation in the programme gave light for a new idea to be born and implemented.

Ayse, together with Nikolas Soros, Eleni Anastasiou, Nikos Georgoudis, Hafeez Hamza, Izchukwu Silas Onuoha and Kayra Gutan, developed Cypology, a multi-communal youth initiative for 'sharing knowledge and research' through a platform for communicating evidence-based knowledge deriving from academic

research in Cyprus.

According to her, Cypology "will produce and disseminate material discussing socio-psychological phenomena such as, the role of intergroup contact in Cyprus, history teaching, the role of women in peacebuilding, collective loss, truth-telling, and the link between corruption and division."

Ayse explains that "I realised the lacunae when I started my academic career and shared this with our group. The gap came to light in my first year of my PhD, when I struggled to find a relevant and up-to-date social platform discussing such topics or encouraging women or young individuals in related areas. Once other individuals shared interest in developing and flourishing this idea, it grew and evolved to what it has become today."

With eyes full of hope for a brighter future,

Ayse says: "Our platform will cultivate scientific bi-communal dialogue, bridge the gap between the public and academia, and amplify the voices of women and youth in the research arena. Also, we expect to combat misinformation around the internet and show that we share reliable information and data-based findings about the Cyprus issue and its respective communities."

The Young Leaders in Action is organized by UNFICYP, in partnership with the British Council and the British High Commissioner in Cyprus and focus on equipping participants on peace and security, peacebuilding, social action, leadership, negotiation, and mediation processes, in addition to providing groups tools and strategies needed to develop their own intercommunal projects and small grants for implementation.



Abandoned dog learns how to “woof again” after being rescued by UNPOL

Meet OP, a Rottweiler sadly abandoned by his owner in the UN buffer zone. The mistreated dog was left to fend for himself in the grounds of an abandoned factory in Derynia, on the eastern side of the island.

OP had lost hope of seeing better days until he was found by two UNPOL officers on patrol, Giulia Dorella, from Italy and Brian Quirke, from Ireland.

UN Police Officer Dorella recalls finding OP cowering in a dark corner of the factory: “He looked so scared and lonely, he had given up hope. He captured my heart as soon as I saw him, so I took him to the vet”. The dog was malnourished, and his legs covered in wounds. After a trip to the vet where he received medical checks and treatment he is now on the mend and has been taken under the wing of Giulia herself, who decided to name him OP, as he was found at one of the UN observation posts.

OP remains in the place where he was discovered, and our UNPOL officers based in Derynia are regularly feeding him and spending time with their new mascot.

UNPOL Officer Dorella said “Sadly finding abandoned pets and working dogs in the buffer zone happens far too often, particularly at the end of each hunting season. Dogs are for life not just for the hunting season.”

Hunting, training dogs or abandoning animals inside the buffer zone are strictly forbidden and poses a serious security risk.

OP has recovered and is happy, healthy and “woofing” again. Nevertheless, he is looking for a new forever home where he can be loved every day with all the care and attention he deserves. If you are looking for a new best friend, OP can be reached via UNFICYP social media channels or email: unficy-public-information-office@un.org



Goodbye to UNFICYP's Chief of Finance

On 29 April, UNFICYP bid farewell to the Chief of Finance, Husein Moussa, after 20 years of serving for peace in Cyprus. We are thankful for his contributions to UNFICYP and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.



Opening of the Pyla/Pile Joint Contact Room

On 15 April, Turkish Cypriot Special Representative Ergün Olgun and Greek Cypriot Negotiator Andreas Mavroyiannis, together with top United Nations official in Cyprus, Colin Stewart, UN Cyprus Talks staff and UNPOL Assistant Police Commissioner Satu Koivu, attended the opening of the Pyla/Pile Joint Contact Room.



Prince Edward visits Cyprus

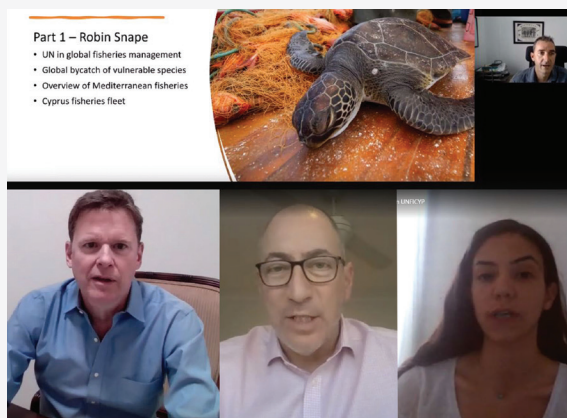
On 21 June, the Countess of Wessex met some inspiring Cypriot women and youth. They briefed her on their work peace & community building efforts on the island. Prince Edward and the Countess met with some of UNFICYP peacekeepers from the United Kingdom based in Ledra Palace Hotel in the United Nations buffer zone.



On 20 May, SRSG Colin Stewart, accompanied by UNFICYP Senior Advisor, Aderemi Adekoya, and the Mission's Chief of Civil Affairs Section, Faylene Woolley, met representatives of Nicosia municipality. Constantinos Yiorkadjis and Mehmet Harmanci, together with their teams, discussed issues related to the buffer zone and living conditions for the citizens of Nicosia.



To mark World Environment Day, UNFICYP held a townhall on 2 June, led by SRSG Colin Stewart, together with the Chief of Mission Support, Joel Cohen and representatives of environmental organisations, Robin Snape, from SPOT, and Annie Papadopoulou, from Bird Life Cyprus, to take a closer look at their work to protect wildlife and ensure they are no longer endangered.



Peacekeepers awarded UN peace medals

UNPOL peacekeepers awarded peace medal

On 5 May, 20 UNPOL peacekeepers from China, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia and Sweden were awarded United Nations medals for serving for peace in Cyprus in a ceremony held at the UN Protected Area, several ambassadors also attended the ceremony.



Queen's Platinum Jubilee medals

On 6 June, UNFICYP peacekeepers from the United Kingdom who were awarded the Queen's Platinum Jubilee medals by the British High Commissioner, Stephen Lille at Ledra Palace. SRSB Colin Stewart, and Mission's Force Commander, Major General Ingrid Gjerde also attended the event to honour their service.



Peacekeepers in action

UN Assistant Secretary-General visits Cyprus

On 14 April, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča met UNFICYP peacekeepers from military, UNPOL and civilian components in Sector 1.



On Job Training

On 6 May, Force Photographer Milos Krinert, conducted on training for Slovak peacekeepers about functioning basic of photography to help them improving reporting activities in their areas of responsibilities.



“Peace must be cultivated; we need to work for it everyday”

Gizem Kavaz is a Cypriot activist committed to promoting peace in Cyprus. She acknowledges that the path to peace can be hard to progress when the political rhetoric across the island is so divisive. But Gizem is not discouraged, “Peace is hard work. Nothing worthwhile comes easy. It is a process not a one-off event or effort. We need to work for it every day.”

Gizem works at the Cyprus Turkish Teachers’ Trade Union as an External Relations Coordinator and is also one of the trainers of the Imagine project which focuses on education for a culture of peace implemented by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research.

In early 2022, she participated in the mindful leadership project, which aims to provide participants with breath and meditation practices to reduce stress, increase resilience and creativity, and to serve as a platform for interactive discussions to enhance communication and interpersonal skills.

“This intercommunal programme was a unique opportunity to engage in a deeper level of discussions on peacebuilding, social cohesion and self-emotional regulation with peacebuilders around Cyprus,” Gizem recalls.

She adds that “it was a fantastic journey of exploring various concepts, values and emotions through sharing our personal experiences, insights and opinions in a very safe environment provided by both mentors and participants.”

“I became aware of the importance of understanding the source of my feelings, improving my problem-solving skills, and building constructive self-confidence for my work as a human-being and a peacebuilder and I felt more motivated to support other people in



my inner circle and to reach out more people who put efforts for creating positive change in society,” she explains.

Gizem stresses that “it is important to cultivate a culture of peace through alternative education methods in countries like Cyprus, with a history of conflict, where communities share mutual losses, separation, grief, and traumas which results in having prejudices and negative feelings against the people from the “other community.”

Inspired by the project, Gizem started implementing her own peace project with focus

at the transformative power of peace education and breathing techniques. She designed a workshop to equip educators and teacher candidates with various skills and tools such as developing socio-emotional intelligence, self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, deepen empathy, participation, active listening, developing critical and creative thinking, understanding the concepts of antiracism, acceptance, inclusion and appreciating multiculturalism and diversity.

The idea about her project came from her strong belief that “to create sustainable peace in Cyprus, we need to rebuild the education systems on both sides of the island”.

Highlighting that “no one is too small to create change and contribute to peace building in Cyprus,” Gizem explains that teachers are highly influential in the education systems on both communities on the island: “they inspire and encourage young generations and are also change makers of their communities.”

The mindful leadership project was organized by Hands Across the Divide and the International Association for Human Values and supported by UNFICYP and implemented from January to June 2022.



“Women were, are and will always be needed to bring communities together”

Eleni Antoniou is a mother of three boys, a writer, a blogger, and a podcaster. She is vocal on issues of feminism and violence against women and the challenges that mothers face including raising children. She believes that “is not only important to empower girls, but to also educate boys so they become allies on our quest towards gender equality.”

Eleni began blogging in 2011, a few months after she had her first baby and decided to quit her job at a local newspaper. She named the blog Georgie’s Mummy and then went on sharing on social media her experiences as a mother in Cyprus. In early 2022, she found a unique opportunity to participate in the mindful leadership project, which provided a series of workshops on meditation and breath work, organized by Hands Across the Divide and the International Association for Human Values, with support from UNFICYP.

Through the programme, she learned “how to find light in a dark place and how to cultivate a mindset for peace,” but also “how important my inner peace is and that in order to be of service to those who need me, I must take care of myself first,” Eleni recalls. She explains that “as a mother I have found this incredibly hard



over the years mainly because we are taught as women and mothers that our role is to sacrifice ourselves, mentally and physically, for our families and loved ones. I gained knowledge and empowerment and inspiration from the programme, but most importantly I gained friends. Friends I would never have met, friendships that would not flourish and bloom if it were not for programmes like this”. Inspired by the idea discussed during the sessions, Eleni started her own peace project and created a podcast with mothers from both communities. “My idea was to bring two Turkish Cypriot mothers and two Greek Cypriot mothers to have a discussion about their experiences and personal stories growing up on a divided island, to open up about myths, lies and propaganda we were taught by our families, society, the media and the education system,” she highlights.

She notes that “the result was absolutely astonishing, the similarities and common experiences we all had was shocking and also so very healing.”

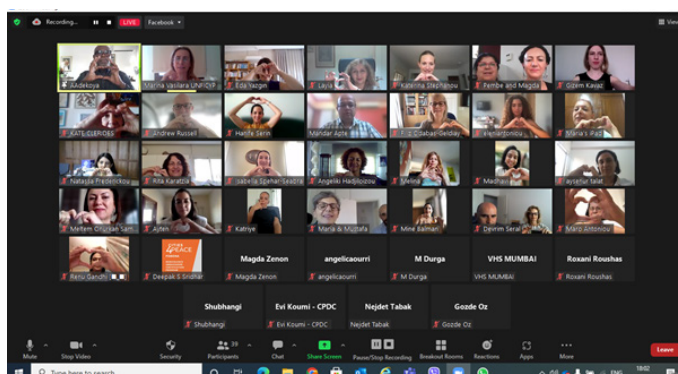
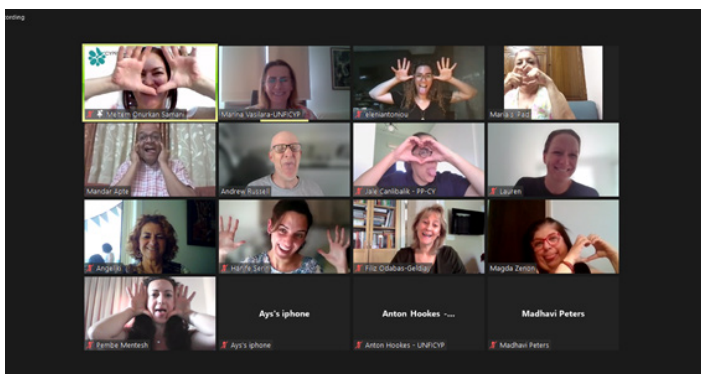
Eleni highlights that the mindful leadership initiative “contributed to empowering women in Cyprus because it has broken down barriers that still exist, a division that until now has not allowed us to come together and have open dialogues. It has shown us that women were, are and will be needed to bring communities together and bring on much needed change.”



UNFICYP Civil Affairs lead initiatives to bring communities together

Mindful leadership programme graduates

On 21 June, 20 women peacebuilders graduated from the Mindful Leadership programme, supported by UNFICYP, and implemented by Hands Across the Divide and the International Association for Human Values. On 23 May, the first cohort of women peacebuilders also had their graduation ceremony. Amazing peace projects came out of their efforts and continue to come out. Well done to all of them!



Youth festival

On 12 and 13 June, Lefke Tourism Association and Friends of Nature Cyprus organized a youth festival in Lefka/e in cooperation with Avli and local youth. Around 40 young participants across the divide joined workshops and concerts and spend time together for two full days. They also visited Lefka/e Walnut Festival, participated in cultural and arts activities, and meet with locals. The festival was supported by UNFICYP.



Arts festival in Famagusta

On 22 May, the last day of giTdAgel an arts event, took place at in the walled city of Famagusta. Over 500 youth from all communities of Cyprus joined film screenings by local directors, workshops held by locals NGOs, and live music performances. The festival was organized by Fabrika Kollektiv, Hade, and KEY, in collaboration with local youth groups and organizations, and showcased a unique example of collaboration and engagement between young people. The festival was supported by UNFICYP.



Business and Networking Fair inside UN buffer zone brings communities together

On 24 June, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus organized a Business and Networking Fair inside the UN buffer zone in Nicosia.

More than 200 people from all communities of Cyprus attended an evening of networking and conversations with businesses and entrepreneurship organisations from across the island where they had an opportunity to participate in panel discussions on how to bring communities together using innovation, technology and social entrepreneurship, on trade and business collaboration between communities and how to establish intercommunal businesses and organizations, visit business stalls and build new relationships and collaborations.

Nicolas Kyriakides, Vice-president of the Board of Oxygono stated: "I hope it is a beginning of a series of similar activities. It was an opportunity to discuss practical business matters with members of the other community. Trade can lead the peace."

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus, Colin Stewart, attended the first-round table discussion with 25 participants from organizations across the island, where they discussed opportunities for economic cooperation and partnerships between the communities.

Podcaster Meltem Burak, who visited the fair said: "It was a great opportunity to meet creative people working in many different sectors. Throughout the panels, I could enhance my knowledge on social innovation, science diplomacy and cultural entrepreneurship. I will certainly use my newly acquired knowledge

in the design of my future podcasts. Overall, the networking event was a great chance to broaden my horizons in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere."

This event was co-organised by UNFICYP, Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Centre, CyprusInno, the Center for Social Innovation and International Communities Organization. Supporting and participating organizations included the Association of Shopkeepers and Artisans, JCI Larnaca, Oxygono, the British Council, StartUp Grind Cyprus, Information Centres of Youth Board of Cyprus, CYENS, Cyprus Youth Council, TCCC Women's entrepreneurship council, Famagusta Youth Union, Nicosia Youth Union, Young Businessmen Association (GiAD), Trade GreenLine, Cyprus Bilingualism Association, Cyprus Entrepreneurship Station, as well as the EU-funded projects Innovative Entrepreneurship and EU Infopoint. Ten businesses from across the island also participated with their stands.

Derya Tangel, who is the Public Space and Information Officer of EU Infopoint, one of the partner organisations, concluded: "The intercommunal Business and Networking Fair was a great event to be part of and we have had the opportunity to meet and network with new people from different regions of the island. We hope for the continuation of such intercommunal activities to support the reunification process."

The Association of Bi-lingualism in Cyprus provided language assistance in Greek and Turkish to support communication among participants.



say

NO

to hate speech.

#NoToHate

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