

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002421/24
to the Commission
Costas Mavrides (S&D)
(5 November 2024)**

Subject: Obstruction of education at the only Greek school in occupied Rizokarpaso in Cyprus

Another serious issue has arisen as a result of the continued efforts by the occupation regime to obstruct education at the only Greek school in occupied Rizokarpaso in Cyprus. Specifically, the various illegal actions repeatedly undertaken by the occupying power have been hampering the school's educational work and staffing efforts. For example, it has been hindering the appointment of teachers, forbidding inspectors from the Cypriot Ministry of Education to visit the school, delaying or forbidding the transportation of books, and hampering building repairs and other types of support. The regime's end goal is to forcibly displace the remaining Greek Cypriot pupils who attend the school in Rizokarpaso to the free areas and expel the enclaved Greek Cypriots from the Occupied Territories.

The situation is triggering fears that the quality of the high school diploma at Rizokarpaso high school will drop because the occupying power is not allowing inspection visits and other forms of educational oversight. These actions are a flagrant violation of the Vienna Agreement and the binding Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

In light of the above, what is the Commission's position vis-à-vis this long-standing and persistent authoritarian policy of the occupying regime, which is to the detriment of the enclaved pupils in Rizokarpaso, and what specific steps does it intend to take straight away in order to address this serious educational issue, which concerns a fundamental human right of EU citizens?

Submitted: 5.11.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(21 January 2025)**

The Commission is aware of the situation of the Greek Cypriot schools in Rizokarpaso (see joint reply to parliamentary questions 548/24 and 701/24 ⁽¹⁾).

It deplores all difficulties that the staff and the students face. The Commission encourages both communities in Cyprus to abide fully by the provisions of the 1975 Third Vienna Agreement ⁽²⁾ and will continue to monitor the situation.

The situation emphasises the urgent need to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue. The Commission welcomes the recent developments at the United Nations (UN) level and hopes that the two agreed forthcoming meetings will produce positive results.

The EU stands ready to play an active role in supporting all stages of the UN-facilitated process, with all appropriate means at its disposal.

The EU remains fully committed to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework, on the basis of a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, in accordance with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and in line with the principles on which the EU is founded and the *acquis*.

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) has long-standing contacts with the Greek Cypriots and Maronites residing in the Turkish Cypriot community, regularly delivering humanitarian assistance to them.

The UN also engages with the education authorities of the Republic of Cyprus and with the Turkish Cypriot local bodies to ensure the functioning of the Greek Cypriot schools in Rizokarpaso.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2024-000548-ASW_EN.html

⁽²⁾ [https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/agreements-the-third-vienna-agreement-\(2-august-1975\).html](https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/agreements-the-third-vienna-agreement-(2-august-1975).html)