
UN ADMITS IT IS UP TO CYPRIOTS TO BROKER DEAL ALONE

04.08.2017

EurActiv (4 August 2017)

The United Nations will not resurrect the collapsed Cyprus reunification talks as the onus is now on the divided islands rival communities to prove they really want a long-elusive settlement, the outgoing UN envoy said on Thursday (4 August).

If people want change, they need to stand up for change, Espen Barth Eide told reporters after a meeting in Nicosia with President Nicos Anastasiades, the Greek Cypriot leader.

The United Nations will not be resurrected by the UN, the resurrection will have to happen from here, he said. It is up to Cypriots... We cant do it for them.

The Norwegian diplomat was bidding farewell to the eastern Mediterranean holiday island as he is stepping down to run in parliamentary elections in Norway.

Commission seeks a European solution to the Cyprus issue

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said yesterday (27 July) that the EU executive wants a European solution to the Cyprus issue.

Efforts to reunify the divided island of Cyprus collapsed at a peace summit in Switzerland last month and Eide said the way ahead is now uncertain.

We are here to help and always available but we are not planning any initiatives, said Eide. The international community needs to be convinced that there is a real intent to try again.

He later crossed the UN-patrolled ceasefire line in Nicosia to hold talks with Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci.

There was a reception on Thursday evening in honour of Eide, attended by both Cypriot leaders, their first meeting since the talks collapsed on 7 July.

The negotiations broke down in the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana after the UN failed to broker a compromise deal on a new security arrangement for a post-solution Cyprus.

Greece wanted to end the right of intervention on Cyprus it holds with Britain and Turkey, while the Greek Cypriots also pushed for a withdrawal of Turkish troops from the former British colony which joined the European Union in 2004.

Greece-Turkey tensions mount over plan to start Cyprus gas drilling

As Cyprus prepares to start offshore drilling for gas in its economic zone, Turkey announced it was readying countermeasures and Greece replied it was ready to defend its sovereign rights, in a clear sign of growing tensions between the two NATO members.

The talks in Switzerland failed to overcome these obstacles, leaving a UN-led push that ran for more than two years - the latest in a long list of aborted bids to find a settlement - in limbo.

Whats left of this phase is a better understanding where an agreement can be found if ever there will be a new attempt, said Eide.

At Crans-Montana the UN was working towards ending guarantees and intervention rights but some troops would have stayed on the ground.

Since the talks collapsed, Greece and Turkey have waged a war of words over the party at fault.

Both Nicosia and Athens have accused UN mediator Eide of having been unprepared for the summit and of not giving the full picture of what happened in the Alpine ski resort.

The island has been divided since 1974, when Turkish troops invaded its northern third in response to an Athens-inspired coup seeking union with Greece.

Turkey still maintains around 35,000 troops in the north, while Akinci heads a self-declared statelet recognised only by Ankara.

Kaynak/Source: