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**SECESSION AS A METHOD OF ETHNIC CONFLICT  
REGULATION IN CYPRUS**

Bachelor's thesis

Programme International Relations

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Tallinn 2019

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## **ABSTRACT**

After constant failure of the negotiations under the framework of bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, secession has become more frequently discussed solution to the Cyprus conflict. According to the researchers, secession can be successful in preventing inter-communal violence, achieving peace and stability in the region and be beneficial for the seceding as well as the existing state. By examining closely the background, the conflict resolution attempts and the theory of secession, the thesis seeks to test this concept in Cyprus. The paper also aims to determine whether secession could be successful in breaking the deadlock of the current negotiations, offer a comprehensive and attainable solution and would it be acceptable for the Cypriot communities. The thesis relies on the literature review and uses qualitative observation method and case study method to provide the theoretical framework and offer critique on applying secession in Cyprus. The study concludes that although secession could end the stalemate of the negotiations, bring many benefits to the both communities and is supported by the Turkish Cypriots, it is unlikely that the approach will be accepted by the Greek Cypriots and therefore while applying the theory can offer a comprehensive solution, it might not be entirely attainable.

Keywords: Cyprus conflict, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, peace talks, secession, conflict regulation

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cyprus is a small island with rich culture and long history located in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea at historic and cultural crossroads between Europe, the Middle East, the Balkans and North Africa. Due to its strategic location, Cyprus has been a target for numerous invaders, settlers and immigrants. Today it is a very popular tourist destination with diverse nature and warm and sunny climate. However, this positive image of the island can be quite deceptive as when looking closer, the deserted vacant buildings, barbed wire, guard towers and constant military presence provide clear evidences of its controversial and often violent past.

Cyprus has been since the Turkish military invasion for 45 years a physically (and even longer politically) divided country. The Cyprus conflict is in essence internal, but it also operates on regional level due to the involvement of Greece and Turkey since the beginning of the dispute and affecting the other neighbouring countries, their relations and interests. In addition, the conflict has also international dimension by offering challenges to the international organisations (the United Nations since 1964, NATO and the European Union) and embroiling the United Kingdom and the United States. Besides that, although the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces and the segregation of the Cypriot communities have been successful in bringing relative peace to the island and preventing further inter-communal violence, prolongation of the conflict can be perceived as a possible source of insecurity and instability in the region. Thus, resolving the Cyprus conflict is not important only for the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, whose economy and welfare can be heavily influenced by the possible solution, but also to the whole region and the international community.

In addition to this, finding a comprehensive solution to the conflict has become increasingly important owing to the issues in the Eastern Mediterranean – the internal developments in Turkey and the increasing threat to the international security from the refugee crisis. The discovery of the enormous natural gas and oil reserves in the region reinforces additionally the interests to solve the conflict in order to secure the energy supply and development (Morelli 2017, 2).

Since 1974, when Turkey invaded the northern part of the island as counterstrike to the coup organised by the Greek junta, many unsuccessful rounds of negotiations have been held under the auspices of the United Nations. The peace talks can be in general characterised as periods of positivism followed by the difficulties, mistrust, misunderstanding, opposed interests and lack of political will (Morelli 2019, 2). In 2004, resolving the conflict seemed to come closer than ever when the Annan Plan was put to referendum however, the plan was highly rejected by the Greek Cypriots. After several failed attempts and periods of general pessimism, the new round of discussions began when Mustafa Akinci became the president of the Turkish Cypriot community in 2015. However, in July 2017 the negotiations collapsed due to the deep-rooted differences in the positions of the parties, lack of trust and reluctance of making necessary convergences in the vital issues (United Nations Security Council 2017, 9-11).

Since the 1970s, the peace talks have been held under the parameters of bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, which would offer the Cypriot communities political equality and reunify the island. Although the parties of the conflict have agreed in principle with the federal framework and the negotiations have been carried on for more than four decades, there are several key issues, which have yet remained unsolved and the solution to the dispute thus appears to be elusive (Vits 2014, 60). In consequence, secession (i.e., partition of territory and people with an outcome of establishing an internationally recognised new seceded state on the territory administrated previously by the original state) as a method of ethnic conflict regulation and the possibility of implementing it successfully in Cyprus has become an object of academic debate. According to the scholars and social scientists, who have studied this concept, although secession tends to be highly controversial topic due the opposition of states and the international community, it can provide the nation-groups and the both states (the existing and the seceded state) with several benefits, end the inter-communal violence and help to achieve peace and stability (Bartkus 1999; Hechter 1992; Pavkovic, Radan 2007).

Despite the topic of implementing secession in Cyprus has become more and more discussed in the academic debates as the negotiations continue to end in deadlock under the current framework, the academic research on the matter has remained rather limited. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to address and provide answers to the two following research questions:

- 1) Could secession be successful in overcoming the impasse in the current negotiation process and offer a comprehensive and attainable solution to the long-lasting conflict?

2) Will the Cypriot communities accept secession as a method of conflict regulation in Cyprus?

For answering these questions the qualitative observation method and the case study method will be used to enable to describe and understand the nature of the characteristics of the conflict itself, the process of the peace talks and the theory of secession and to help to provide the in-depth analysis and critique on secession as a method of conflict regulation in Cyprus.

The theoretical part of the paper relies on the review of academic and non-academic literature on the history and background of the Cyprus conflict, analysis of the peace talks and secession as a conflict regulation theory. Books, articles, reports and research papers have been used in order to promote discussion and help to draw conclusions on the matter. Also it is important to highlight that since at the time of writing the thesis, the peace process towards resolving the conflict still continued and thus, the possible developments in the negotiations might have altered the current situation and affected the theory part and as a consequence the analysis and the conclusions. Therefore the time period covered by the thesis extends to the end of January 2019.

The thesis is divided into four parts. The first part, for introducing the nature of the conflict, focuses on the historical background of the dispute and offers a short overview of its history, the main parties, urgency of reaching to an agreement, the reasons why it has been proven difficult to find an optimal solution, the main obstacles and key issues, which need to be addressed. The second part provides an overview and short analysis on the failed attempts of the conflict resolution and the peace process in Cyprus. This will help to understand, why the negotiations focused on unifying the island under the concept of bi-zonal bi-communal federation have ended in deadlock and proven unsatisfactory to the both parties. The third part examines secession as a conflict regulation theory, analysis its benefits and challenges and observes the conditions necessary for secession to occur. The fourth and final part tests the theory of secession in Cyprus by investigating if the conditions necessary for secession being successful are present in Cyprus and by examining whether it would be capable of resolving the key issues and satisfying the parties of the conflict and leading to sustainable peace on the island.



# **1. BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT**

Although nowadays, the majority of the inhabitants of Cyprus are mainly descendants of Hellenic culture, due to the island's geo-strategic position in the middle of the trade routes between the Middle East, Africa and Europe, it has been conquered by several nations, who have all had influence on Cyprus and its history (Rousselet 2017). The existence of multi-ethnic society today in Cyprus is a reminder of those numerous invaders and their influence. To get a better insight into the conflict, it is important to examine and discover the roots of the dispute, explore the historical background, identify the main parties and their involvement, find the major obstacles for the settlement and the key issues and aspirations of the sides of the conflict.

## **1.1. Short historical overview of the conflict**

The conflict, which has divided the island for more than four decades, originates from 1950s-1960s during the events of the independence process of Cyprus. In 1955 began the Greek Cypriots' confrontation against the British rule with aspiration to unify the island with Greece (referred as *enosis*) and the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA) militarily supported by Greece was established. At the same time, the Turkish Cypriots, who afraid that *enosis* would threaten their identity, began demanding as a response partition on the basis of the ethnic division (*taksim*) and as counterweight to EOKA, the Turkish Resistance Organisation (TMT), militarily supported by Turkey, was founded. In order to prevent *enosis* and eliminate an uncooperative leader of the Greek Cypriots, the British authorities started to recruit Turkish Cypriots in the forces opposing the goal of union with Greece, which led to several clashes between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Demetriou 2004). The United Kingdom had also another reason for supporting the Turkish Cypriots, for ensuring the presence of the British army on the island continuing to be necessary, it was essential to prevent the conflict from being solved with diplomatic means and although being already beyond unfriendly, deteriorate the relations between Turkey and Greece (Kangasniemi 2016, 25).

In order to maintain peace and control over the island and to ensure that none of the parties took leading role in deciding over the future of Cyprus, the Zurich and London Agreements were

signed in 1959 between the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey and the leaders of the Cypriot communities granting Cyprus its independence in 1960 (Lankes 2015). The three contracts of the agreements drafted the constitution of the republic, gave sovereignty to Cyprus and determined power-sharing between the Cypriot communities (the Treaty of Establishment), secured the integrity, security and constitutional structure of the republic (the Treaty of Guarantee) and gave Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom the right to defend the island when considered necessary (the Treaty of Alliance) (Morelli 2017, 1). The Treaty of Establishment also allowed the United Kingdom to keep their military bases in Cyprus and the Treaty of Guarantee gave the guarantor powers permission to intervene in the state affairs in the event of breach of a provision (Security Council Report 2008). However, the treaties were highly criticised as they took little account the real aspirations of the Cypriots (at that time the Greek Cypriots wished to unify the island with Greece and the Turkish Cypriots were in favour of *taksim*). Besides that, the treaties were claimed to favour the Turkish minority by giving them excessive power as they were overrepresented in the parliament as well as in the public service. The ratio of representation determined by the agreements was 30/70 although considering the real distribution of the population, it should have been 20/80 (Kyle 1997, 9). Thus, the situation was unsatisfactory for both Cypriot communities and caused strong tensions and violent clashes, which culminated with constitutional crisis in 1963 and Turkish military invasion in 1974.

In 1963, the Archbishop of Greek Orthodox Church and the president of Cyprus Makarios III decided due to the pressure from the Greek community and Greece to make changes in the constitution, which was perceived by the Turkish side to threaten the security of Turkish Cypriots and favour the Greek Cypriot leaders by increasing their power (Security Council Report 2008). This led to several outbreaks of violence and brought the island close to the civil war (Vits 2014, 11). A year later, in 1964 the Turkish Cypriots decided to resign from the Cypriote government and many Turkish Cypriots were relocated in enclaves. Due to the escalating violence between the communities, in March 1964 the United Nations established the Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFCYP) operating and safeguarding the cease-fire line between the Cypriots even today.

The violence escalated in July 1974, when a military junta organised *coup d'état* against president Makarios III and overthrew the government of Cyprus. The replacement of Makarios III with a stronger supporter of *enosis* led to Turkish military intervention and separation of the island (Kangasniemi 2016, 33-34). At first Turkey occupied only the territory, which it found

justified under the Zurich and London agreements (the Treaty of Guarantee) but by the end of August, the Turkish military took control over 37% of the area of Cyprus (Vits 2014, 11). This led to the dislocation of Cypriots as the Greek Cypriots had to settle to the southern part of the island controlled by the republic whereas the Turkish Cypriots fled to the northern part controlled by the Turkish army (Solomonides 2008, 63).

Although the international community agreed that the Turkish invasion was illegal, the request of Greek Cypriots and Greece to impose sanctions against Turkey was not met (Kyle 1997). Nine years later, in 1983 due to the continuous failure of the negotiations, the leader of the Turkish Cypriots Rauf Denktash declared establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which even today is recognised only by Turkey as international community mainly recognises the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus over the whole island (Vits 2014, 12). The absence of international recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has made it politically and economically isolated and dependent on the support of Turkey and as a counterweight to this, Turkey has rejected recognising the Republic of Cyprus since 1963 (Security Council Report 2008, 5).

Since the Turkish military intervention and separation of the island in 1974, numerous rounds of peace talks have been held in order to solve the conflict, which all have ended in deadlock. The negotiations have mostly been conducted under the auspices of the United Nations with the purpose of keeping the conflict under control and finding a comprehensive solution under the parameters of bi-zonal, bi-communal federation (Vits 2014, 13). The intermediaries of the peace talks have unsuccessfully tried to reconcile the positions of the Cypriots but the two communities have maintained their own visions on how the federal Cypriot state should be governed and achieved (Morelli 2017, 2). The Greek Cypriots wished the Cypriot state to be unitary and demanded for abolishment of the Treaties of Alliance and the security guarantees and called the Turkish Cypriots to acknowledge their status of a minority while the Turkish Cypriots aspired for additional guarantees, bi-zonality and political equality between the two communities (Security Council Report 2008, 7). The Cypriots being reluctant to alter their positions in these matters and the other conflictual issues such as governance, power sharing, property rights, territorial adjustments, citizenship, security and guarantees being not yet solved, hinders the process of negotiations and the settlement of the conflict even today.

## 1.2. The main parties of the conflict

The most closely related parties of the conflict are the two main ethnic communities of Cyprus – the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, whose’ distant positions and ideas of a perfect solution, deep-rooted disagreements and hostility towards each other might hinder the most the peace talks. However, besides the Cypriots, there are also other countries and international organisations involved in the dispute.

The guarantor powers and so called “Mother Countries” Greece and Turkey have been engaged in the conflict since its outbreak and have had great influence on emergence, resolving and prolonging the dispute (Hensinger 2010). Both countries see themselves as protectors of the two communities and have actively participated in the peace talks, been involved in the treaties and supported the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and their militias (Security Council Report 2008, 19). While the goal of Turkey has been relatively clear and remained unchanged (Turkey wishes to protect the rights and security of Turkish Cypriots and secure its influence over the island), the policy of Greece towards Greek Cypriots has fluctuated over time by once promoting the *enosis*, then abandoning the idea and supporting the independence of the island and the Zurich and London Agreements (Security Council Report 2008, 19).

Apart from the two countries mentioned above, the United Kingdom as the third guarantor of the Zurich and London Agreements and former colonial power of Cyprus, has been involved and influenced the conflict and the peace process since the beginning of the dispute and currently owns two military bases in Cyprus, which it desires to maintain (Vits 2014, 23). Also the United States has had its part in the conflict and the negotiation process. During the Cold War the main goal of the United States was to secure the credibility and stability of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and persuade the dispute being solved within NATO as worsening relations and tension between the two member states – Greece and Turkey, might have easily caused an intra-NATO conflict (Security Council Report 2008, 18). Today the aspiration of the United States is to settle the conflict in order to secure the stability and energy development in the Eastern Mediterranean (Morelli 2019, 3).

From the international organisations, the United Nations has had probably the greatest part in the conflict and highly supported the peace talks. Before the Turkish invasion in 1974, the main goal of the United Nations was to maintain the Zurich London Agreements, secure the sovereignty of

Cyprus and manage the increasing violence between the belligerent parties. Since the events in 1974, the United Nations took the role of mediator of the negotiations and has supported the reunification of Cyprus under the parameters of bi-zonal, bi-communal and independent federation. The United Nations also has provided humanitarian assistance and maintained the buffer zone between the belligerent communities (Security Council Report 2008, 6-15). When the Republic of Cyprus joined the European Union without the northern part of the island after rejecting the Annan Plan in 2004, the European Union became another party involved in the dispute (Vits 2014, 17). However, the acceptance of the Republic of Cyprus in the European Union has sometimes been seen as a problematic issue. Although from one side it can be viewed as a step towards new status of Cyprus and motivator for overcoming the differences, it can also be claimed to be illegal since the Zurich and London Agreements prohibited the Republic of Cyprus to participate in any international organisation or pacts of alliance without Greece and Turkey both being members (Demetriou 2004, 6).

### **1.3. The importance of solving the conflict**

Although the presence of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus has brought cease-fire on the island and there is almost non-existence of violence between the two main ethnic communities, it is still crucial for several reasons to find a solution to the long-lasting dispute.

The Turkish military intervention and the separation of the island has brought several human and property rights violation issues for the Cypriot communities. According to Thorp (2010), after the outbreak of violence in 1973 and Turkish intervention in 1974, thousands of Greek and Turkish Cypriots were forced to resettle as the Greek Cypriots fled to the southern part and the Turkish Cypriots to the northern part of the island and left behind their lives, properties and became internally displaced people. Thus, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) found Turkey (since the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not recognised by the international community and consequently is not an independent state) to be answerable for denying the resettled Greek Cypriots access to their properties, inhuman treatment, violating the right of freedom of religion and obliged to compensate the loss of homes left behind (Aksar 2001). Besides that, the accession of Cyprus to the European Union (EU) without a comprehensive peace settlement has created a situation where in despite of both communities being technically EU citizens, only the Greek Cypriots are able to enjoy the privileges of membership while the

Turkish Cypriots still have no access to the benefits of economy and political institutions of the EU (Dağlı 2017).

When Cyprus joined the European Union without the comprehensive peace settlement in May 2004, it became an unsolved conflict within the EU borders and brought along several challenges to the EU governance such as the Turkey-EU relations, NATO-EU divisions and European energy policy (Christou 2008). Although the recent developments in Turkey have made the accession of Turkey to the EU even more questionable, the unsolved conflict is an obstacle for Turkey gaining full EU membership and adds further tension to Turkey-EU relations (Dağlı 2017). The similar problem lies in the NATO-EU relations –according to Taşpınar (2010), while the Republic of Cyprus enjoys leverage in the EU, Turkey as the member of NATO, where Cyprus is not a member, enjoys leverage in the alliance. This has prevented not only the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to NATO but also restrained any security arrangements and formal meetings between the alliance and the Political and Security Committee of the European Union (Taşpınar 2010).

The unsolved conflict adds further tension not only to Turkey-EU, NATO-EU, Turkey-Greece-Cyprus relations, but also presents an additional source of instability in the Eastern Mediterranean due to the strategic geographical location of Cyprus and its closeness of the Middle East, North Africa, Iraq and Syria (Dağlı 2017). Additional factors, which destabilise the situation and add urgency on settling the conflict, are the discovered natural gas resources and vast reserves of oil near the coasts of the island and rivalry over the rights to exploit the benefits of these resources (Emmanouilidis 2019). Therefore, it can be argued that resolving the Cyprus conflict could ease off the tensions in the region and dispute over the energy policies and normalise the relations between Turkey, its neighbours, EU-Turkey and NATO-EU.

#### **1.4. Hindering factors affecting the negotiations**

In order to get a better insight over the Cyprus Problem and why the comprehensive settlement has remained yet elusive, it is necessary to focus on the reasons which have presented obstacles for the talks and made the Cyprus conflict intractable. First, the internal factors such as distrust between the two communities, lack of political will, ethnic victimisation, unaddressed traumas and historical issues and economic asymmetries will be investigated. Then the ramifications of

the Zurich and London Agreements and disconcerting actions of its parties will be examined. Finally, the side-effects of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Cyprus and the hindering effects of the actions of the international community over the peace talks will be explored.

#### **1.4.1. The internal factors**

One of the factors which pose an obstacle to the peace talks is distrust between the two communities of Cyprus. When looking closer the negotiation process, it can be seen that there is an impression that even if the parties will reach to an agreement, implementation of the resolution is going to fail as it is perceived that the opposing side will never truly comply with making necessary compromises and concessions for the dispute to be settled (Sözen 2012, 119). Also the partition of the communities for more than 40 years has not had a positive effect on trust issues and as Ahmet Sözen (2012, 120) has brought out, as a result of long time separation, the Turkish Cypriots find that the communities will hardly ever be able to live mixed again.

Another factor hampering the negotiations is the lack of political will and its influence on general public's growing pessimism towards the possibility that the conflict will ever be solved. It can be noticed when observing the peace talks that both parties have shown during the negotiations from time to time signs of losing political will to solve the conflict and have merely engaged in the negotiations in order to avoid criticism and to maintain their political power (Vits 2014, 26). This attitude of the political elites has had its influence on the general public and the two communities – even though resolving the conflict is still desired, the loss of hope for the settlement going to happen any time soon has become evident (Sözen 2012, 114). According to Vits (2014, 26), this can lead to a perception that the negotiations are going to end in deadlock even before the next round of meetings has begun and make it harder for the public to trust and accept the offered solutions. There is also the problem with inconsistency in what compromises and concessions the political elites are ready to agree upon and what can be accepted by the two communities (Sözen 2012, 120). This can be illustrated greatly by the failure of the Annan Plan in 2004, when the political elites were unsuccessful in preparing the communities and informing them in timely manner about the content of the offered solution (Sözen 2012, 120). In addition to this, the presidential elections have proven to hinder the negotiations and affected more than once the talks to end in deadlock. As the leaders are focusing on standing for re-election, they are more likely to avoid making any concessions or signing deals, which they believe their voters will refuse to accept even if doing so would bring the sides closer to reaching a settlement or prevent standstill in the negotiations (Chislett 2017).

Additional factor, which needs to be addressed is ethnic victimisation and consequently diverting responsibility to the opposing side or external parties. According to Maria Hadjipavlou (2010a), in ethno-national conflicts, the belligerent parties have shown tendency to blame the other side for sufferings, injustice and traumatic experiences and abstain from taking any responsibility as they believe that their side has only defended themselves from the actions of the “aggressor”, which is also the case in Cyprus. Likewise the actions of the parties of Zurich and London Agreements, international organisations and international community in general are blamed for escalating the conflict and constraining the peace talks. This has allowed the two communities to divert responsibility of resolving the conflict, which according to Vits (2014, 25), hinders the communities and respective political elites taking leading role in the peace talks and reaching to a comprehensive settlement.

Perhaps one of the most influential internal factors making the Cyprus Problem difficult to resolve, is that the both communities are still heavily affected by the traumas and sufferings caused by the other side in history. It is estimated that during the Turkish military intervention in 1974, more than 180 thousand Greek Cypriots lost their homes and were forced to flee to south, many were killed and imprisoned (Hadjipavlou 2010b, 87). Not to mention the sufferings of the Turkish Cypriots, whom approximately one third were displaced, many were killed and injured after the outbreaks of violence in 1963 (Hadjipavlou 2010b, 87). This has caused fear and hatred between the two communities, made the sides to perceive each other rather as an enemy and left the parties contradictory perceptions of the events in 1974 (while the Turkish Cypriots regarded it as a peace operation, the Greek Cypriots find Turkish military intervention violating the territorial integrity and human rights in Cyprus), which makes cooperation and finding common ground for solving the conflict even more difficult (Hadjipavlou 2010b, 88). Besides that, the separation and events in history have caused distrust and accusations towards each other as while the Turkish Cypriots believe that the Greek Cypriots have not given up the idea of *enosis* and in case of reunification, without the protection of Turkey, will neglect the agreement or try to dominate over the Turkish Cypriots, the Greek Cypriots are afraid of Turkey as well as other possible guarantor countries intervening in the internal issues of reunified Cyprus and perceive the presence of Turkish military and numerous mainland Turkish settlers on the island as a potential threat to their security (Faustmann 2004, 49).

In addition, economic asymmetries can be argued to pose an obstacle to the peace process. After the constitutional crisis in 1963 and separation of the island in 1974, the Turkish and Greek



Cypriots have experienced unequal social and economic development as the economy, military and culture of Turkish Cypriots has been under the influence and dependence of Turkey while the Republic of Cyprus due to being internationally recognised has been able to prosper economically (Hadjipavlou 2010b, 86). According to Sözen (2012, 120), this has made the Greek Cypriots cautious as it is afraid that when the settlement is reached and the island unified, the Greek Cypriots as economically more advanced side, are compelled to finance the Turkish Cypriots in order to reduce the economic gap.

#### **1.4.2. The consequences of the Zurich and London Agreements and the actions of its parties**

Due to increasing pressure of self-determination and outbreaks of violence, the United Kingdom agreed in 1959 to grant independence to Cyprus. As the United Kingdom was not ready to give up the military bases in the strategic location and wished at the same time to prevent provoking Greece and Turkey into hostile actions, the Zurich and London Agreements were signed (the Security Council Report 2008, 17). The Treaty of Guarantee granted the three parties guarantor role, maintained their influence on the island and allowed the United Kingdom to retain its military bases. Not only the treaties focused rather greatly on the interests of these three countries, they also took little account the real aspirations of Cypriots as the independence agreement based on the idea of bi-communal federation did not meet the demands of neither of the communities (International Crisis Group 2014, 5). The discontentment with the agreements led to the constitutional crisis only three years later and the following failed efforts to solve the emerged conflict and rounds of unsuccessful peace talks have only decreased the public support and belief in reaching to a settlement (Madisson 2013, 69).

The other hindering factor to the peace talks evolved from the Zurich and London agreements is the political and cultural separation of the two main communities, which deepened even more after the Turkish military invasion and physical partition of the island. It can be argued that the new constitution promoted the separation of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots since the communities were segregated in the education system and communal chambers and even the elections of the president and the vice president were organised and carried out separately (Hadjipavlou 2010b, 84; Vits 2014, 10). This means that the communities were encouraged to cope on their own rather than cooperate on a larger scale with each other, which can be argued to have a negative impact on the ability of the sides working together towards the peace settlement.

In addition to this, the unfriendly relations between Greece and Turkey, their regional interests in Cyprus and influence over the two communities has also constrained the success of the peace talks (Madisson 2013, 73). According to the Security Council Report (2008, 19), the both countries – Greece and Turkey have taken the protective role on the island and provided the respective communities and militaries with weapons and support and have had political and economic influence on the island. Thus it can be argued that the stipulation of the Zurich and London Agreements, which stated that the possible solution must be acceptable for all the guarantor countries, the rather conflictual relation between Turkey and Greece and their actions during the evolvement of the conflict, have hindered the peace talks and made settling the dispute even more challenging (Vits 2014, 25).

#### **1.4.3. The United Nations and European Union and the side-effects of peacekeeping**

According to Ahmet Sözen (2012, 111), the solution offered by the United Nations and supported by many others – the bi-communal, bi-zonal federation, has become exhausted and allows little room for manoeuvre and thus poses constraining effect on the negotiation process. As was previously brought out, the bi-zonal, bi-communal federation was not the first preference for neither of the communities and thus it is already a compromise for the Cypriots and consequently can impede making future concessions (Security Council Report 2008, 4). This and the strict bi-communal framework have led to never-ending negotiations where all the parties know well the other side`s arguments, desires and opinions and coming up with anything new is hardly unlikely and consequently the peace talks have kept going round in circles (Vits 2014, 30).

Another factor which has complicated the situation and made settling the conflict more difficult is the European Union and its actions regarding the accession of Cyprus. According to the Security Council Report (2008, 8), there was a hope that the accession negotiations of Cyprus would influence the peace talks in a positive way and accelerate unifying the island by making the communities work tighter with the goal of becoming a member of the union as a whole. When the European Union, in order to influence the Turkish Cypriots to make compromises in the negotiations and accept the Annan Plan, abandoned the precondition that Cyprus must be unified country for accession, the Greek Cypriots lost their interest in resolving the conflict and rejected the Annan Plan in April 2004 and the Republic of Cyprus became in May 2004 a member of the European Union without the Turkish Cypriots (Vits 2014, 29).

The prolonged conflict and the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Cyprus have caused side-effects, which hinder the negotiations and the two communities working together towards the settlement. Farid Mirbagheri (2006, 39-40) has brought out in his article that the presence of the United Nations peacekeeping forces on the island has caused some unforeseen negative consequences such as shifting away urgency of the conflict as the physical fighting has brought to a minimum; causing misleading perception of the dispute being solved or the situation being satisfactory; granting the belligerent parties to keep pursuing the “ideal” but also unrealistic goals and making possible for the sides, who seem to feel under these conditions safe enough, to conduct provoking actions and pronouncements towards each other.

### **1.5. The key issues of the conflict**

After the goal of *enosis* was abandoned by the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots realised that *taksim* was not feasible, the negotiations have focused largely on achieving bi-zonal and bi-communal federation founded on the bases of political equality of the two Cypriot communities since 1970s (Beyatlı et al. 2011, 17). However, although the peace talks have continued already for almost five decades and both sides have made numerous concessions and achieved progress in many areas, disagreements over several key issues and opinions on how the unified federal state in detail should be created, have remained unsolved (Morelli 2017, 18). Therefore, there are several key aspects, which need to be addressed for coming closer to the comprehensive agreement.

The first key issue, which needs to be solved for paving the way for settling the conflict, is Governance. Although the both communities have accepted in principal the solution of the bi-zonal and bi-communal politically equal federation, in reality the real aspirations of the two sides differ greatly from this vision (Vits 2014, 60). This has had influence on how each side believes the reunited Cyprus should be achieved and governed – while the Greek Cypriots are in favour of the unitary Cypriot state evolved from the Republic of Cyprus with strong centralised federal government administrating the whole island, the Turkish Cypriots support the idea of a rather weak central government with two relatively independent states (Beyatlı et al. 2011, 19-20). The Turkish Cypriots also expect the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to become internationally recognised as they believe that the settling agreement should be signed between two equal and

recognised states, which is a prospect that could not be accepted by the Greek Cypriots any time soon (Morelli 2017, 19).

The next key issue, which needs to be addressed, is Power Sharing. In general the main problem here is whether the political power should be divided equally between the two communities or the characteristics of the population taken into account and the Greek Cypriots as the majority of the population given proportionally bigger share (Vits 2014, 63). The Greek Cypriots find that they should have more political power than the Turkish Cypriots and therefore prefer a presidential council, which would make decisions as a collective or under the principle of consensus and reject any power sharing model which would give unrestrained power to the Turkish community (Beyatlı et al. 2011, 32, 34). At the same time the Turkish Cypriots wish the political power to be shared more equally and thus support the idea of rotational presidency and the executive system where the decisions are made by the one currently holding the position of the president of the federal state (Morelli 2017,19; Beyatlı et al. 2011, 34).

The third key issue is about Territorial Adjustments. As a consequence of Turkish military invasion in 1974, approximately 37% of Cyprus is nowadays under the administration of the Turkish Cypriots including some areas and cities which were historically inhabited mostly by the Greek Cypriots. This has created several challenges during the negotiations such as how the territory of the island should be divided by the communities, which side should administer the regions which used to belong to the Greek Cypriots, what to do with the areas under the control of United Nations peacekeeping forces and the military bases of the United Kingdom and how many Greek Cypriots would be allowed to return to their homes (Morelli 2017, 21). The Greek Cypriots find that the area administrated by the Turkish Cypriots should be no more than 28% and the territory under the buffer zone as well as the cities of Varosha and Morphou to be returned to their community and 90 000 Greek Cypriots given permission to resettle (Morelli 2017, 21). However, according to Vits (2014, 68), the Turkish Cypriots would prefer to prevent large-scale territorial adjustments and giving back Verosha and wish to reduce the amount of returning Greek Cypriots.

There is also the question of Citizenship, which needs to be addressed. After the Turkish military intervention and separation of the island, it is estimated that approximately 100 000 mainland Turks settled in the northern part of Cyprus (Vits 2014, 66). The future of these settlers in case of unification of the island is perceived differently in the two communities. Since the Greek

Cypriots consider the high number of mainland Turks to be a threat to their side and are afraid that it might change the ratio of the two communities and thus lead to the additional adjustments in the sizes of the future constituent states, they claim that not more than 50 000 mainland Turks should be allowed to remain on the island (Morelli 2019, 31). However, the Turkish Cypriots believe that since many of the mainland Turks have become a part of their community by marriage and other family ties, they should be allowed to stay on the island (Vits 2014, 67).

The next key issue to be examined is the question of Property, which originates from the Turkish military invasion in 1974 as aftermath to the constitutional crisis of Cyprus ten years earlier. During these events, roughly 150 000 Greek Cypriots became uprooted as they were forced to abandon their homes in the north and resettle to the southern part of the island whereas 50 000 Turkish Cypriots living in the south had to move to the north (Morelli 2019, 29). The vast number of vacant property left behind by the resettled people from both communities has caused an ongoing debate as the sides of the dispute hold different views on how this issue should be solved in case of reunification of the island and how the legal owners should be compensated for their losses. The Greek Cypriots believe that the legal owners should be allowed to decide whether they would like to return or be compensated for their lost properties in an alternative way while the Turkish Cypriots due to wishing to avoid large number of Greek Cypriots returning to north, prefer compensation or exchange of equivalent property (Vits 2014, 69).

There are also problems regarding the European Union and Economy, which the two sides have already to greater extent settled but still some issues have remained unsolved. While the leaders have agreed that the principles of the European Union such as the rights of the citizens must be respected after the settlement in both communities, it has yet remained unclear how to set up in detail some internal procedures regarding violations and executing European law and how the seats in the European Union bodies should be divided by the Cypriots (United Nations Security Council 2017, 2). The challenges under the economy chapter are mostly linked with establishing financial institutions and practices in the future federal state and integrating the economies of the two communities but also settling the dispute on how and when the natural resources should be shared by the sides (Morelli 2019, 34). There is also one additional question regarding the economy as it is still unclear how the future federal state should afford funding the compensation for the lost properties as it has been estimated that the costs of it might be over 25 billion euros (Morelli 2019, 29).

The final and perhaps the most disputed issue of the negotiations is the question of Security Guarantees as well as the presence of the Turkish military on the island. The position of the Greek Cypriots is that the Turkish military forces should be withdrawn from the island directly after the federation is established since the European Union and the United Nations are fully capable of providing necessary security guarantees to both communities and argue that the Treaty of Guarantee allowing the third countries such as Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom intervene in the domestic issues of island must be abandoned (Morelli 2019, 32). However, the Turkish Cypriots hold different view on the matter, they wish the Turkish military forces to remain on the island and argue that if the troops were to leave, they would be in an unequal position since the number of Greek Cypriot security forces outweighs the number of Turkish Cypriots`and thus based on the traumatising events in 1960s would make them to feel unsecure (Vits 2017, 64; Morelli 2019, 32). Besides that, the Turkish Cypriots have stated that the Treaty of Guarantees should not be abolished and they are not willing to accept any agreements without Turkey being one of the guarantors, especially consering the security issues and the fair treatment of Turkish community (Beyatlı et al. 2011, 92-93).

## **2. THE NEGOTIATIONS**

Since the separation of the island after the Turkish military intervention in 1974, several rounds of so far unsuccessful peace talks have been organised either directly or indirectly between the two communities under the auspices of the United Nations. The negotiations in general can be characterised as periods of positivism towards the possibilities of coming closer to reaching an agreement followed by difficult times due to disagreements and unsolved differences regarding several key issues. This part of the thesis will focus on the history of the peace talks since the Annan Plan until January 2019 and investigate why none of them has been successful in terms of offering a comprehensive solution acceptable for all parties and the negotiations thus far have ended in stalemate.

### **2.1. The Annan Plan**

After several rounds of unsuccessful negotiations from 1974 to 2002, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan presented the preliminary version of the Foundation Agreement generally known as the Annan Plan, which was put to a referendum simultaneously in both communities in April 2004, only a month after the final version was published. Although the majority of the Turkish Cypriots (65%) voted in favour of the Annan Plan, reunification of the island was not obtained as 75% of the Greek Cypriots decided to reject it (Lindenstrauss 2008, 95). The outcome of the binding referendum surprised the international community as it was perceived that the Turkish not Greek Cypriots were opposing the peace settlement under the conditions proposed by the United Nations, although when looking closer the content of the Annan Plan and the events preceding the referendum, it becomes clear why the Greek Cypriots did not support the agreement (Vits 2017, 21).

The detailed plan proposed establishing the Unified Cyprus Republic under the concept of the combination of confederation and loose federation where the rather independent constituent states would have been politically equal (Lindenstrauss 2008, 95). The plan introduced a complex model of power sharing in the federal government where the important decisions would

have required approval and acceptance from the both communities (Annan Plan 2004, 9-10). The composition of the public service would have been proportional to the number of citizens of each constituent state but it was also stated that no less than one-third had to come from each community, which according to Vits (2014, 19), would have led to overrepresentation of Turkish Cypriots in the public service considering their share of the population – a prospect which was not favoured by the Greek Cypriots.

Another reason, why the Greek Cypriots did not support the proposal was that although the agreement would have decreased eventually the number of Turkish military troops in Cyprus, the plan did not address sufficiently the other vital security concerns of the Greek Cypriots as Turkey would have been allowed to maintain its guarantor status over the federation as well as the both constituent states and thus intervene in the internal issues of the unified Cyprus, also the Turkish settlers would have been permitted to remain on the island and finally granted citizenship of the federation (Faustmann 2004, 53-54). Even though the agreement would have reduced the territory controlled by the Turkish Cypriots to 28% and proposed a solution on the right of Greek Cypriots to return to these regained areas, the Greek Cypriots found the plan due to the model being complicated and full of restrictions insufficient in terms of satisfying their demands (Lindenstrauss 2008, 95; Vits 2014, 20).

After the precondition of reunification of the island before attaining membership of the European Union was dropped in 2003, the Greek Cypriots lost incentive for accepting the Annan Plan and perceived it serving more the interests of the other parties of the dispute and felt being forced to agree with the terms unbeneficial to their community (Lindenstrauss 2008, 97). Besides that according to Theodoulou (2016), the political elite, especially the president Tassos Papadopoulos of the Republic of Cyprus did not support the agreement and encouraged the Greek Cypriots to vote against the referendum by persuading them that the plan would not be successful in terms of unifying the island and postponing the negotiations until Cyprus was a member of the European Union would give them a stronger position in the future peace talks.

Moreover, it is argued that acceleration of the negotiation process did not help to gain support to the agreement from neither of the communities. As the talks over the settlement threatened to end in deadlock, Kofi Annan decided to bypass the political elites and finished the final version of the plan himself, which made some representatives of the communities to oppose even more his proposal (Theodoulou 2016). Additionally, the short period of time after the Annan Plan was



made public and put to a referendum was not sufficient for organising successful campaigns in order to influence both communities to support the proposed peace settlement (Lindenstrauss 2008, 96).

## **2.2. The negotiations between Christofias and Talat in 2008-2010**

After the failure of the Annan Plan, the more sceptical leader of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Rauf Denktaş was replaced in April 2005 by Mehmet Ali Talat, who was perceived to be more cooperative and pro-settlement and supported by the Turkish Cypriots as well as the international community for his efforts in influencing the Turkish Cypriots to accept the Annan Plan (Morelli 2019, 3). In despite of several attempts for resuming the negotiations, the sides were unable to continue the talks due to difference of opinion in the key issues and lack of political will until the presidential elections in the Republic of Cyprus in February 2008 (Security Council Report 2008, 9). Since Talat and the new president of the Greek Cypriots, Demetris Christofias came from similar backgrounds and shared both commitment on unifying the island within the framework of bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, it was hoped that they could overcome disagreements and reach to a comprehensive solution (Qvortrup 2014).

The beginning of the negotiations appeared to be successful as the leaders held several meetings and created special working groups focusing on substantial issues (Napolitano 2011, 3-4). However, even though the sides were able to achieve some progress in the negotiations, it soon became evident that the disagreements over several key issues were still present. While Talat insisted on the new Federation emerging equally from the both communities of Cyprus and provisions of the Annan Plan included in the grounds of the peace talks, Christofias believed that as the Greek Cypriots had already refused to accept the proposed solution of Kofi Annan, in order to prevent losing their support it would be the best to avoid making any references on the plan (Morelli 2019, 4). In addition to this according to Napolitano (2011, 4), the established working groups, which were supposed to support the negotiation process by providing the groundwork for the talks failed to fulfil their task due to insufficient negotiation power and complicated even more the situation for leaking confidential and sensitive information. Furthermore it can be argued that the upcoming elections in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus became another constraint to the negotiations since Talat, who attempted to secure re-election rejected making additional concessions in some key issues in order to avoid losing the

support of the Turkish Cypriots and harming his political position (Napolitano 2011, 5-6). Also Christofias became less flexible in the negotiations as he realised that in case Talat were replaced by a new leader (which he already presumed to happen) making concessions might have led the Greek Cypriots in a difficult position (Morelli 2019, 4).

Although the intensive talks between Talat and Christofias continued until the end of March 2010, less than a month before the elections, it appeared that since the sides became reluctant to making further concessions the negotiations came to a halt and a brief and rather vague statement summarising the progress the leaders had been able to achieve, was issued (Napolitano 2011, 6). However, this step which was perceived to be Talat's last effort to regaining political support was not proven successful as in April 2010 Talat lost the elections and Dervis Eroglu became the president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Morelli 2019, 5).

### **2.3. The negotiations between Christofias and Eroglu in 2010-2012**

Although Eroglu had stated during his campaign that the unsuccessful peace talks should not be allowed to continue endlessly and claimed that at some point if the negotiations proceed to end in stalemate, the sides must admit that the gap between the positions of the two communities has become insuperable and suggested separation of Cyprus, after becoming the president of the Turkish Cypriot community he expressed his commitment on resuming the talks under the auspices of the United Nations (Morelli 2019, 5).

The official meetings between Eroglu and Christofias began in the end of March 2010, where the first problems arose due to the statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon in which he praised the decision of continuing the negotiations where it was left off and made reference to the concessions made previously by Christofias and Talat. The Greek Cypriots, who had hoped for a fresh start became worried as they understood that the concessions (including some of which were not supported by the general public) might have been regarded as agreements while the Turkish Cypriots were more concerned about the United Nations Security Council resolutions (for instance several calls for removal of Turkish troops from the island), which Ban Ki-moon had stated the Cypriots to agree with (Morelli 2019, 5-6).

Additional difficulties became evident when the leaders started to negotiate over the issues of property, territory, security and potential guarantees. Christofias believed that it should be the choice of the original owners whether they prefer to get compensation, exchange properties or return while Eroglu insisted that the interests of the new inhabitants must also be taken into account and supported the limited right to return as he perceived that re-settling the Greek Cypriots, who possessed about 75% of the real estate in the north might prevent implementing the bi-zonality and make the Turkish Cypriots a minority in their own constituent state (Napolitano 2011, 8). Besides that, the Turkish Cypriots were not willing to give up the presence of the Turkish military on the island and insisted on Turkey remaining one of the guarantor powers while the Greek Cypriots claimed that they were not going to accept any agreement under these conditions (Morelli 2019, 7).

Apart from this, it can be argued that the Republic of Cyprus holding the six-month rotating Presidency of the European Union during the second half of 2012 and the emergence of economic crisis at the same time in Cyprus as an outcome of general Eurozone budget and fiscal crisis, hindered the negotiations. Christofias lacked time and energy for fully focusing on the peace talks as he had to manage also the internal issues and take care of the presidency of the Council of the European Union (Morelli 2019, 8).

Until the end of 2011 the leaders organised several intensified but futile meetings and although they were successful in solving some technical issues, it became soon evident that the parties had become less committed on settling the conflict (Napolitano 2011, 10). In order to accelerate the negotiations and break the deadlock, Ban Ki-moon decided to organise a meeting and invited the two leaders in January 2011 to New York, where the presidents were expected to present their proposals for the settlement. However, as appeared that Christofias and Eroglu were unable to overcome the deep-rooted differences in sensitive issues and make necessary concessions, the meeting was unsuccessful in terms of reaching an agreement and Ban Ki-moon decided to call off the international conference on settling the final issues of the dispute and in May 2012, the talks were officially suspended (Morelli 2019, 7-8).

## **2.4. The negotiations between Anastasiades and Eroglu in 2013-2015**

Christofias, seeing that the dispute will not be settled within the last months of his presidency, decided not to run for re-election and in January 2013, Nicos Anastasiades became the new president of the Republic of Cyprus. Although it was perceived that the next round of the negotiations might be more successful as Anastasiades, who had supported several sections of the Annan Plan, expressed his strong commitment on solving the conflict, many months passed before the leaders finally met and it took even longer for the peace talks to officially resume (Morelli 2019, 9-10; Yabanci 2014).

However, there are several reasons why the leaders were unable of proceeding with the negotiations directly after the presidential elections in the Republic of Cyprus. After becoming president, Anastasiades first had to face severe challenges in economy and internal political issues due to the fiscal and banking crisis leaving him little time for focusing on the reopening of the negotiations (Morelli 2019, 9). Besides that, in order to handle the economic crisis, he was forced to turn to the European Union for help and adopt the recommended austerity measures, which due to becoming soon generally disliked by the Greek Cypriots made Anastasiades to realise that at that moment the general public was not ready to accept the concessions necessary for the negotiations to resume (Yabanci 2014). Moreover, it became evident that the Turkish Cypriots, who had publicly insisted on the talks to be reopened as soon as possible, were not prepared to make any compromises and Eroglu even suggested that although he perceived the reunification of the island still obtainable, other alternative solutions should be considered especially if the negotiations continue to be unproductive (Morelli 2019, 9-10). In addition to this, the unwillingness of making compromises was also noticed when the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cyprus came up with a proposal to permit the Turkish Cypriots to use the port of the Famagusta (a city administrated by the Greek Cypriots) for direct trade with other European countries in exchange for returning Varosha (a former resort city, used to be manly inhabited by the Greek Cypriots) as a confidence-building measure and the offer was rejected (International Crisis Group 2014, 2). Furthermore, it appeared that the leaders were highly cautious towards making decisions that could undermine their political status in their respective communities as after Anastasiades and Eroglu met in the end of May 2013, it took almost a year before they were able to officially resume with the negotiations due to the disagreements over the joint declaration. Although the leaders were unable of first settling the language of the document, then determining the desired outcomes of the Cypriot communities and finally coming to an

agreement whether this kind of statement was even necessary, after the interference of the United States, the joint declaration was finally published in February 2014 (Morelli 2019, 9-11).

Anastasiades and Eroglu declared in the joint declaration their commitment to establishing bi-zonal, bi-communal federation emanating equally from the both communities with single sovereignty. The politically equal and rather autonomous constituent states would share a single citizenship and the united Cyprus federation would become a member of the United Nations as well as the European Union. The document also excluded possibility of the federation or a part of it unifying with other countries (Anastasiades-Eroglu Joint Declaration 2014). However, although releasing the document was perceived as a step forward in the process of settling the conflict, it also had its downsides as Anastasiades was not only strongly criticised for accepting the autonomous and equal status of the Turkish Cypriot state, but he also lost his coalition partner in the government (Morelli 2019, 11).

Even though Anastasiades and Eroglu held several meetings within the next passing months, they were unable of coming closer to the settlement and when the both parties rejected each other's proposals on possible solutions in July 2014, it became uncertain if and how the negotiations should be continued. In order to resume the peace talks Espen Barth Eide, the new special advisor to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, organised a meeting in September, which due to the friendly atmosphere appeared to lead the negotiations in a positive direction (Morelli 2019, 11).

However, the hope for the talks to lead to the settlement did not last long after the Turkish seismic exploration vessel with the Turkish Cypriots' authorisation was moved into the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Cyprus with the goal of carrying out surveys and granting the Northern Cyprus more power towards participating in the decision-making about the use of the natural resources in Cyprus (Hazou 2014). The actions of Turkey were perceived by the Greek Cypriots as direct, provocative and illegal attack towards the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus and consequently Anastasiades proclaimed that he was not going to carry on with the negotiations until Turkey's seismic vessel stayed in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus. Due to the pressure from the European Union and the international community, Turkey at last removed its vessel in April 2015 but because of the upcoming presidential elections in the Northern Cyprus, it was decided to suspend the negotiations until the elections were over (Morelli 2019, 12-13).

## **2.5. The negotiations between Anastasiades and Akinci**

In the end of April 2014, Mustafa Akinci, the leader of a small Communal Democratic Party and former major of the Turkish Cypriot controlled part of Nicosia, was elected the president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The new leader had never been involved in the previous talks and although he had attained useful cross-community cooperation skills through his tasks as a major, some believed that he was inexperienced and since Akinci did not have majority in the government, unable of gaining support on the possible peace settlement from the political elite (Morelli 2019, 13; Grigoriadis 2015). Besides that, due to Akinci had suggested during his campaign changes in the current relationship between the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, which was strongly rejected by the latter, his candidacy was not supported by Turkish political elite (Morelli 2019, 14). However, others perceived that Akinci would be more flexible negotiator than Eroglu had been and his previous non-engagement in the talks would give him possibility to have a fresh start without any constraints and preconditions from the previous negotiations (Morelli 2019, 13).

As the both leaders had expressed their willingness to resume the talks as soon as possible, Anastasiades and Akinci met already in the beginning of May 2015 during the dinner hosted by the United Nations and less than two weeks later, held their first formal meeting. The negotiations were surrounded by the positive atmosphere between the two leaders and several measures for confidence building were made such as dropping visa requirement, restoring electricity connections and opening up new border checkpoint (Euronews 2015). Although the meetings were held regularly throughout the summer and autumn 2015 and the leaders had been able to settle issues regarding economy, the EU and governance, some Greek Cypriots believed that only little progress had been made since the most controversial and sensitive matters such as territory, property, security guarantees, rotating presidency and the future of the Turkish military on the island had not yet been addressed (Christou 2015). Also it became clear that below the surface there was still difference of opinion between the two communities in many issues when several representatives of Greek Cypriots criticised the concessions Anastasiades had made and insisted on withdrawal of the foreign military troops and avoidance of security guarantees involving Turkey while Akinci appeared to support political and sovereign equality and Turkey remaining the guarantor (Morelli 2019, 14, 27).

Besides that, also the developments in the internal politics of the both communities complicated the negotiation process. In the beginning of 2016 the government of the Northern Cyprus, which had supported Akinci, collapsed and a new, more critical towards the president, his decisions and the negotiations in general, coalition was constructed. Also as an outcome of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Cyprus in spring 2016, the pro-settlement party lost seats in the government and a political party known for its pessimistic views towards power-sharing agreements with the Turkish Cypriots, gained access to the government (Morelli 2019, 15).

Regardless of these events, the leaders continued with intensive meetings and it was perceived that the negotiators had been able to make significant progress in the chapters of citizenship, governance, EU and economy. The negotiators also agreed that the fundamental issues should be resolved in order to organise a meeting with all the guarantor countries (referred as five-party conference), where the security guarantees would be settled and final agreement drafted. However, as the leaders were incapable of solving the sensitive issues regarding property, power sharing and territory, the meeting was cancelled (Morelli 2019, 16).

### **2.5.1. November 2016 – the meeting in Mont Pelerin**

In order to resolve one of the most disputed and sensitive issue of territory and come to an agreement on setting a date for the five-party conference with Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom on matters concerning security and guarantees, the United Nations hosted in the beginning of November 2016, intensive peace talks between Anastasiades and Akinci in Mont Pelerin.

Although the first week of the meetings seemed to be promising as the leaders managed to achieve progress in some areas and discussed about their views on the future border between the constituent states, the difficulties soon arose (Morelli 2019, 16). The negotiators were unable of coming to an agreement on the size of the territory controlled by each constituent state, the quantity of refugees permitted to return and how to divide the coastline (Christou 2016). The position of the Greek Cypriots was that the area administrated by the Turkish Cypriots should be reduced to 28, 2% and they demanded bigger share of the coastline while the Turkish Cypriots believed that they should control no less than 29, 2% of the island and indicated that they would accept the request for additional coastline on the condition that these areas would not become inhabited (Morelli, 2019, 30). Also Anastasiades insisted on allowing 80 000-90 000 Greek

Cypriots to return to the areas which would go under the Greek Cypriots' jurisdiction whereas Akinci wished to reduce this approximately to 70 000 (Christou 2016).

Besides that, due to the influence of Turkey and being afraid of the possible impacts of the returning Greek Cypriots, Akinci declared that he would not agree on any territorial adjustments before the issues regarding security guarantees were solved and included in the agenda of the talks (Morelli 2019, 16). Since the Greek Cypriots believed that as a member of the European Union, the unified Cyprus would not need additional guarantees and the main purpose of the talks had been settling the territorial issues, Anastasiades rejected Akinci's demand and refused to schedule meeting for the five-party conference (Christou 2016).

Due to these disagreements no further progress was made and the talks ended in deadlock. However, the leaders agreed to continue with the negotiations in the beginning of January 2017 in Geneva with the purpose of overcoming the disagreements and settling the unsolved issues and set the date for the five-party conference (Morelli 2019, 17).

### **2.5.2. The Geneva Conference in January 2017**

The first meeting in Geneva on January 9, 2017 between the two Cypriot leaders along with the representatives of the main political parties and European Union, was perceived to be constructive and successful as the negotiators were able to achieve progress on many substantial issues (Chislett 2017). However, the difficulties soon arose during the second meeting on January 11, 2017 when Anastasiades and Akinci presented their maps representing their views on the future borderline between the two constituent states and the amount of territory each side should administer. Despite the exchanged maps differed only with roughly 1%, it still became evident that this issue was far from being solved (Morelli 2019, 18). The five-party meeting on January 12, 2017 on the issues of security and guarantees also ended without a comprehensive solution. While the Foreign Minister of Turkey and Akinci insisted on preserving the guarantor system to secure the guarantorship of Turkey and demanded the Turkish military troops to be allowed to stay on the island, Anastasiades claimed that the membership of European Union and United Nations would be sufficient in terms of providing all the necessary guarantees and thus rejected their demand and requested Turkey to withdraw its military forces from Cyprus (Gotev 2017; Chislett 2017). When it became clear that neither of the parties was prepared to make concessions regarding territory, guarantees and security, the representative of Turkey left and the Geneva Conference ended in stalemate (Morelli 2019, 17).



However, since Anastasiades and Akinci did not wish the failure of the Geneva Conference to affect the progress they had been able to achieve even more, the leaders decided to set up a working group consisting of technical experts from the both communities, the European Union and guarantor countries with the task of overcoming the differences in the basic issues and making preparations for resumption of the negotiations as soon as possible (Dongmiao 2017). When the working group met in Mont Pelerin on January 18, 2017 they were successful in defying the main concerns regarding the issues of security and guarantees and coming up with the means for addressing these problems (FES 2017a, 2). As an outcome of this Anastasiades and Akinci decided to continue with the negotiations in the end of January 2017.

The official meeting between the Cypriot leaders was held on January 27, 2017 followed by two sessions in the beginning of February mainly focusing on the issues with the four freedoms of the European Union (free movement of people, services, goods and the property rights) brought out previously by Turkey and Turkish Cypriots during the five-party conference and on setting the date for the second Geneva Conference (Morelli 2019, 19). There were several constraints from the both sides which hindered the negotiations. While Akinci and the Turkish political elite still demanded the four freedoms to be extended also to the Turkish citizens living in northern Cyprus, Anastasiades claimed it to be a decision which could be made only by the European Union and after the unification of Cyprus (Morelli 2019, 18). Additional problems arose when the parliament of the Republic of Cyprus passed the law on February 10, requiring the public schools to commemorate the *enosis* referendum in January 1950 and as a result of this, Akinci decided to cancel the meetings and set annulment of the resolution as one of the preconditions for the talks to resume (FES 2017b, 2-4). Although Anastasiades claimed that the law would not have significant impact on the Greek Cypriot schools, he proposed an amendment bestowing the Ministry of Education, not the parliament, the authority over deciding which events the schools should commemorate (Morelli 2019, 20). In addition to this, it was claimed by the Greek Cypriots that Akinci due to the influence from Turkey, deliberately procrastinated the negotiations as Turkish president Erdogan could not afford making any concessions on issues regarding Cyprus nor did he have time for focusing on the peace talks before the constitutional referendum on April 16, 2017 (FES 2017b, 4).

However, after several efforts for reopening the negotiations, Anastasiades and Akinci finally decided to continue with the peace talks on April 11, 2017. Although the sides agreed it was necessary to organise another international conference with the guarantor countries, there was a

disagreement over the preconditions and sequence of the issues which had to be addressed. While Anastasiades argued that the issues of territorial adjustments, security and guarantees should be discussed first and only after these matters were resolved, the negotiations can focus on remaining problems, Akinci claimed that all the key issues should be discussed simultaneously as he realised that if Greek Cypriots made enough compromises (for instance on political equality) it would be easier for Turkey and Turkish Cypriots to accept concessions on security (Morelli 2019, 21, 22). Besides that, additional tension between the sides appeared when the Greek Cypriots planned to conduct hydrocarbons exploration drillings in July 2017 near the coast of Cyprus and as response to this Turkey announced that the Turkish seismic vessel would carry out seismic analysis in the Cypriot exclusive economic zone (FES 2017c, 2). Although the negotiations continued and Anastasiades and Akince were able to achieve progress in some areas such as the four freedoms, governance and economy, it became clear that very little progress was made in other issues and since the sides were incapable of setting the date for the new conference, the United Nations Special Adviser decided to invite the both leaders to New York (Morelli 2019, 20). As a result of this, the date for the next five-party conference was set.

### **2.5.3. The Crans Montana Conference in June 2017**

When the Cypriot leaders along with delegations from the guarantor countries and the United Nations met at Crans Montana on June 28, 2017 it became apparent that the disagreements over the security and guarantees system had not yet disappeared. While Anastasiades and the Foreign Minister of Greece suggested elimination of guarantees and withdrawal of the Turkish military, Akinci and the Foreign Minister of Turkey claimed they were ready to reduce the number of troops but the Turkish security guarantees must remain (FES 2017d, 3). When the United Nations Secretary-General Guterres joined the conference on June 30, he discovered that due to the reluctance of the parties to alter the positions over these issues, the negotiations were in standstill and thus issued the framework paper on the necessary concessions each side was expected to make (Morelli 2019, 21).

The framework presented by Guterres consisted of six issues, which he believed had to be addressed and possible concessions for resolving these matters. On the issue of security, Guterres proposed abolition of the Treaty of Guarantee and replacing it with a system acceptable for both parties. Regarding the foreign troops in Cyprus the Secretary-General suggested reduction to the level stated in the Treaty of Alliance (950 officers, non-commissioned officers and men from Greek side and 650 from Turkish side). Concerning the issue of territorial adjustments Guterres

indicated that the Turkish Cypriots will have to take into account the demands of the Greek Cypriots. On property he advised the sides concerning the territories returned to the Greek Cypriots to give the previous owners the right to choose between compensation, exchange and reinstatement while in the areas remaining under the administration of Turkish Cypriots, the decisions of the current owners should be prioritised but not 100 per cent. On equivalent treatment Guterres suggested setting a quota for the Turkish nationals living in Cyprus for gaining privileges of the citizens of the European Union. Regarding power sharing and the question of rotating presidency, the Secretary-General suggested further discussions between the Cypriot leaders (United Nations Security Council 2017, 4-6; FES 2017d, 4-6).

When Anastasiades and Akinci presented their renewed proposals with additional concessions on July 3, 2017 it became apparent that the sides had not yet been able to bridge the gap between their positions. Although the Greek Cypriots agreed a small number of Turkish military troops staying on the island until all the provisions of a possible unification agreement have been implemented, they insisted that those forces eventually have to be withdrawn and the Treaty of Guarantee scrapped whereas the Turkish Cypriots, despite of accepting the reduction of Turkish military forces, urged that the system of security guarantees must be retained (Morelli 2019, 22). Although the sides were able to come closer in many aspects within the next following days, the differences still remained due to lack of trust and reluctance of making necessary concessions, which finally led to a stalemate and the Secretary-General closing the conference without a comprehensive settlement on July 7, 2017 (United Nations Security Council 2017, 6).

## **2.6. The latest developments**

When Guterres issued his report on Cyprus on September 28, 2017 the Secretary-General expressed his hope for the negotiations to resume under the auspices of the United Nations where they had left off in July as soon as possible (Morelli 2019, 23). In his observations Guterres declared that the parties had been able to agree on many of the core aspects in all the chapters but also admitted that there were plenty of issues, which had not yet been resolved and needed further discussion. Besides, he acknowledged that for overcoming the last differences, the sides need to develop mutual trust, abandon their rigid positions and make additional concessions in a timely manner and called the parties to commit on finding enough common ground in order to continue with the negotiations (United Nations Security Council 2017, 9-11).

However, despite several informal meetings and the efforts of the United Nations to break the deadlock, the sides have not been able of coming closer to resuming officially the negotiations since summer 2017. According to Morelli (2019, 23-26), while the approach of bi-zonal and bi-communal federation still seems most preferable, the leaders have also suggested changes in the framework as Akinci has proposed consideration of the two state solution and after the re-election Anastasiades came up with the idea of loose or decentralised federation.

The impasse in the negotiation process has also frustrated some members of the Security Council such as the United Kingdom and the United States and made them to consider making changes in the mandate of the peace keeping mission or even exit strategy in despite of strong opposition of Russia (Security Council Report, 2018). However, it has still remained unclear if, when and under which framework the official negotiations will resume.

### **3. SECESSION AS A METHOD OF ETHNIC CONFLICT REGULATION**

Since the negotiations based on the approach of the bi-zonal, bi-communal federation have so far been unsuccessful in providing a comprehensive solution and the recent progress of the peace talks, as brought out in the last chapter has been small or even non-existent, other methods such as secession merit further consideration. This part of the thesis will focus on secession as a theory and a conflict regulation method, investigate the conditions necessary for secession to occur and examine its benefits and challenges.

#### **3.1. Secession**

The concept of secession (also sometimes referred as partition or self-determination) has been contested among legal scholars and social scientists as they hold different positions on the means required for achieving it (is the involvement of threat of force necessary or not) and the reaction of the original state (whether is it essential that the host state opposes to secession) nevertheless, the outcome of secession is still in despite of these elements, establishment of a new seceded state on the territory administrated previously by the original state (Pavkovic 2018). Thus Pavkovic and Radan have defined secession in the context of formation of political units as "... the creation of a new state by the withdrawal of a territory and its population where that territory was previously part of an existing state" (2007, 5). In the process of secession the existing state, from which the new state is established is usually referred to as the host or original state and the new political unit, as the seceded state. There is also the concept of pure secession, which is based on an idea that secession, when it occurs is an outcome of rational and collective choice of the seceding as well as the host state and thus the original state accepts the demand for secession not because of its political and economic weakness but through a thought-out decision (Hechter 1992). However, when looking closer the cases of Norway and Ireland, Hechter used as examples, it becomes clear that since the host states (Sweden and England) lacked military power and there was strong international pressure, the original states did not actually have a choice in this matter and thus the permission of the host state as long as the process leads to creation of new state on the relevant territory is irrelevant (Pavkovic 2018). Thus, it can be stated

that the elements of secession are: withdrawal of territory and population of the existing state; creation of a new seceding state on the part of territory which was administrated previously by the existing state; transfer of jurisdiction and sovereignty over that territory to the new seceding state as the state institutions of the existing state do not have control anymore over the seceding territory and people; the existing state does not dissolve and continues to exist (Pakovic, Radan 2007, 8-12).

However there is also one additional condition which needs to be fulfilled for secession to be considered as successful. According to Hechter (1992), the new seceded state does not only wish to exercise power over the withdrawn territory and people, but also to gain right to do so and by that to become an independent sovereign state recognised by the international organisations and other states. This means that the requirement of successful secession and also the last part of its process is international recognition and the failure to obtain it is often a common indicator of the unsuccessful attempts of secession (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 9-11).

### **3.2. Conditions necessary for the secession to occur**

There are five elements, which can be considered vital for secessionist movements to occur. The first condition is the existence of a distinct community with strong group identification in a multinational state (Hechter 1992). Usually that community can differ from the others living in the multinational state by its language, customs, cultural heritage, religion and ancestry but also for having different aspirations, beliefs and sense of belonging together with their own national group rather than the whole population of the state (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 14-16). According to Hechter (1992), strong group identification is believed to emerge more frequently if the regional, not common production and consumption interests seem to dominate in the state and the social structure and physical features (such as topography) of the country preclude communication between the communities. Also that distinct group tends to be the minority of the population and believe that their rights and freedoms are threatened by the dominant and bigger community, which has often led the communities to become represented separately in politics of the state (Bartkus 1999, 10-12; Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 14).

The second element, which is frequently associated with secessionist movements is territory or more precisely, the distribution of the territory. It is believed that for secession to occur, there

must be a subdivision of territory on the existing state which is mainly populated by a single community sharing a common desire for secession on which the new independent state could be established (Hechter 1992). This means that secessions are more likely to happen (or attempted) when there is physical territorial segregation between the communities than in the states where the secessionist groups are dispersed across the country and the communities are mixed (Bartkus 1999, 11).

Another important condition is the existence of effective leadership bringing together the people calling for greater independence and organising political movements showing the support for secession. According to Bartkus (1999, 11), the desire of some distinct group for independence alone is not sufficient enough for the international community to start to perceive it as a serious threat and possibility of actual secession, thus effective leadership is necessary for these movements to become more than just violent confrontations between the communities. The emergence of effective leadership however, can be dependent on the laws and regulations of the existing state since the high freedom for association and regional institutional autonomy can make the creation and retention of the secessionist parties promoting movements for self-determination easier and more affordable (Hechter 1992).

The fourth condition for secessionist movements to occur is the support of the distinct community and their discontentment with the current situation and their position in the society. It has been claimed that the middle class or people working in the tertiary sector tend to support secessionist movements more often than others. According to Hechter (1992), the reason for this might be that they are comparatively more skilled and used to managing in the bureaucratic environment and due to their occupation these people are usually less dependent on the territorial and economic ties with the existing state. Also discontentment, which can lead to growth in support for secessionist movement can be caused by the perceived discrimination, suppression, unequal conditions and representation of the distinct community, especially when there are considerable differences in the religion and language of the nation groups (Bartkus 1999, 11). The elites of the distinct community are believed to support secession more when the regional autonomous institutions (and also their power and position in these institutions) are threatened to be dissolved by the existing state or when they find that secession could be potentially economically profitable for them and their group (Hechter 1992).

The next requirement for secession to occur involves the host state and its reaction. The process and emergence of secessionist movement depend on whether the host state is perceived to be weak (for instance due to wars or deterring economic situation) or if it is a highly effective strong state. In case of a weak state, the distinct community already desiring secession can start to pursue for independence more easily due to deterring economic benefits the host state used to provide and take advantage of the situation as the existing state might not be capable economically and militarily suppressing the movement and thus becomes forced to recognise the right of self-determination of that group (Hechter 1992; McGarry, O'Leary 1993, 15). In case of a highly effective independent state, it becomes slightly more complicated since states tend to strive for preserving their territorial integrity and in emergence of secessionist movement a strong state has many tools for preventing secession from happening such as offering constitutional reforms or providing that distinct community with resources and economic benefits which could influence the group (and especially the leaders) to drop their demands and in case these two options fail to work, the state can repress the community and intervene militarily (Hechter 1992). However, when the highly effective state fails to suppress the movement due to geographic factors, pressure from the international community, lack of support or owing to the external intervention, it becomes possible for secession to occur in despite of the opposition of the existing state (Pavkovic 2018).

It has also been noticed that secession and its attempts have been more frequent in federal or multinational states. The reason behind it might be that sharing and exercising limited sovereignty can eventually become dissatisfying to the political elites of the distinct communities and due to their experience in the central and federal government and the existence of already separate political institutions and borders between the units, secession might be perceived as a logical step towards gaining full independence (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 14-18). However, it is important to keep in mind that as was stated before, the process of secession is not complete and considered as successful until the independence and sovereignty of the new seceded state has become internationally recognised (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 5).

### **3.3. Benefits of secession**

There are many benefits and reasons why distinct communities seek for full self-determination by the means of establishing an independent internationally recognised state through secession.



While the distinct community may already long for full independence, the decision to carry out secession is usually not made (especially by the political elites) until the benefits of seceding exceed the perceived costs of it and the advantages of remaining a part of the existing state however, as secession can also be an outcome of wars and outbreaks of violence, there are some exceptions (Bartkus 1999, 30; McGarry, O'Leary 1993, 14).

The formerly disadvantaged elites of the distinct community can benefit from sovereign statehood established through secession by gaining more power and being granted with better economic opportunities. After the creation of a new seceded state, there will be many profitable positions in the government and in other political and economic institutions, which need to be filled and the competition for the scarce economic resources and in politics can motivate the leaders of the community to create new employment opportunities and increase upward mobility among the members from other social classes (Bartkus 1999, 204).

Gaining full self-determination in an independent officially recognised state provides also several advantages to the whole seceded community in social and economic aspects as well as in the issues regarding security. After granting fully independent statehood, the distinct community usually becomes free to exercise control over its territory in the way most suitable to its values and culture and by that it becomes possible for instance to maintain better their cultural heritage and preserve religious and linguistic background, celebrate important traditions and have greater impact on the political life and decision-making process (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 28). Besides that, secession can improve the economic condition of the population of the new state by offering greater economic freedom and providing access to exploitation of the natural resources on its territory (Hechter 1992). Also as the international financial aid and multilateral assistance programmes are in general limited only to the officially recognised states, the status provided by fully independent statehood makes it possible to for the seceded state and its population to receive financial support it would not be entitled otherwise (Bartkus 1999, 203). Moreover, as an independent state its population and companies can get access to benefits of larger markets, free movement of goods, people, capital and people through the membership of supra-national organisations and free trade regions (Bartkus 1999, 195). Regarding security issues, it has been stated that through independent statehood the distinct communities have greater opportunities for ensuring their safety since the mutual recognition enables the use of force for self-defence and the principle of non-intervention and respect for sovereignty prohibits in most cases other states

intervening militarily in internal affairs of a sovereign state as the international law permits it only for extremely compelling reasons (Bartkus 1999, 108, 206, 209).

Another benefit of secession is that it can improve the international peace as in case of a multinational state, where one community dominates and subjugates the other and denies its desire for right to equality, sovereignty and maintenance of cultural values, the situation might generate violent conflicts and by that pose a threat to the international peace (Bartkus 1999, 15; Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 25). The physical separation of the belligerent parties and granting the minority full self-determination can stop the mass violence and put an end to ethnic and religious discrimination, aggressive cultural assimilation and protect the sustainability of the culture and traditions of the distinct communities (Bartkus 1999, 203; McGarry, O'Leary 1993, 15).

### **3.4. The challenges of secession**

There are many challenges and costs associated with secession, which pose strong restraint on movements of seeking full self-determination through independent statehood and reasons why distinct communities frequently have been noticed in despite of desiring secession to remain in a membership of an existing stronger and larger state.

Secession has sometimes been perceived as a negative phenomenon, which has led to hostility towards this concept due to violence or a threat of force associated with its process as in many cases there have been used belligerent methods for attempting or repressing movements of partition. The negative view on this concept has been even amplified since this term is often used for describing aggressive actions in cases which by the definition were not actually secessionist movements (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 3-7).

There are also some issues regarding security which are perceived to be in favour of staying as a part of the existing state and thus making secession less attractive option. The larger and stronger host state is believed to be in a better position of providing security to its citizens as it has already been internationally recognised and by that holds the right of exercising self-defence in case of violent actions and military interventions caused by other states (Bartkus 1999, 33). Besides that, it has been stated that the existing state tends to be in most cases militarily and economically advanced and by that more capable of defending itself than a new, seceded state

could be (Bartkus 1999, 34). However, the change in intra-state relations, establishment of international law, recognition of territorial integrity of sovereign states, diplomatic crisis management practices and possible membership of international security arrangement organisations have made defending itself more attainable for smaller and weaker states (Bartkus 1999, 189-191).

There are also several economic aspects, which can be considered as compelling factors of secession. The powerful and vast host states due to their size and level of development are more capable of granting their citizens access to different resources, large consumer markets, transport and networking facilities and to provide the less economically advanced communities financial assistance in the form of welfare programs, redistribution of resources and various subsidies (Bartkus 1999, 38). Besides that, after seceding, the new state has to face many economic challenges as it has to manage with limited resources and at the same time focus on establishing different policies and systems for regulating its domestic economy and providing necessary means for its citizens (Bartkus 1999, 53). Nevertheless, due to globalisation and its influence on increasing interdependence and integration between individual states' economies, also the smaller independent states have access to global markets and can benefit from trans-border movement of services, capital, goods and people and are eligible for receiving foreign aid (Bartkus 1999, 222).

Another challenge to secessionist movements is the opposition of the host states, since when the distinct community succeeds in gaining independence, it also leads to the deprivation of territory and people of the existing state, which due to the desire of preserving its territorial integrity, the states usually wish to avoid (Bartkus 1999, 54). There are many reasons why states tend to oppose the idea of losing their territory or a part of it. For instance the territory might be economically valuable due to its natural resources, trade routes and infrastructure or there are important cultural, religious and historical sites in those areas which are not significant only to the distinct community but also to the other citizens of the host state (Ker-Lindsay 2014, 33, 34). There is also the question of national pride since the states and their citizens seem to perceive that being forced to accept the demands of secessionists and by that losing a part of territory, can damage their reputation and authority (Bartkus 1999, 54). Besides that, the opposing groups might be strongly emotionally attached to the territory and due to the fear of being forced to move and becoming displaced as an outcome of secession (or attempts of it), they often try to persuade the central governments to take actions against self-determination movements (Ker-

Lindsay 2014, 31, 32). Moreover, the host states might not be only against of secessionist movements but also the methods of achieving it (Ker-Lindsay 2014, 36, 37). Furthermore, when a distinct community has been able to achieve (with or without external assistance) withdrawal of the territory but not yet independent statehood, the host state can try to prevent it from gaining international recognition due to desire for reunification, maintain the status quo, delaying the process in the hope of getting more favourable options or simply being unwilling to accept the defeat and loss of territory (Ker-Lindsay 2014, 38-41).

Secession is also often opposed internationally mainly for two reasons. First reason is that due to the geopolitical realities, the states usually wish to maintain friendly relations with each other and when a host state is facing secessionist movement, recognising the sovereignty of the new seceding state would most likely deteriorate the relations (Hechter 1992). The second reason is the fear that recognising the independence of a seceding distinct community and by that showing support on acts of secession might lead to increase in fragmentation attempts and since many independent states nowadays comprise two or more nations, it is believed that reducing barriers to secession can raise the possibility of more states being forced to manage the realities of self-determination (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 23; Hechter 1992).

Another challenge to secession is its legality. While the communities desiring secession can claim that their demands are morally justified on the bases of the right to self-determination of all nations, the host states opposing the idea emphasize the concept of territorial integrity. As strange as it might seem, the both sides rely with their statements on the international law and principles established by the United Nations (Bartkus 1999, 68, 69). When examining closer the issue, it becomes clear that although the claim for self-determination is in general perceived to be justified, there are some limitations to it. Also the United Nations opposes the deprivation of territory of an internationally recognised independent state through secession without the consent of the state and especially with violent methods (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 23).

## **4. SECESSION AS A METHOD OF ETHNIC CONFLICT REGULATION IN CYPRUS**

It can be noticed on the bases of the previous chapters, that some characteristics of the current situation in Cyprus are already somewhat inherent to secession as a part of the territory and population of the republic has withdrawn (the events in 1974), a new seceding state on the territory administrated previously by the host state has created (the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) and the host state has continued to exist. The next element – transfer of jurisdiction and sovereignty over that territory to the new seceding state, is more debatable as although the state institutions of the republic do not have control anymore over the seceded territory and people, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is militarily, politically and economically dependent on and under the influence of Turkey (Bartkus 1999, 162). The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus also has not yet gained international recognition since only Turkey has formally recognised its sovereignty (Bartkus 1999, 161).

The fourth and final part of the thesis will test the theory of secession in Cyprus. First it will be examined whether the conditions necessary for secession to occur have been present in Cyprus. Then the key issues brought out previously will be revised under the framework of successful secession. After that, the factors supporting partition in Cyprus will be investigated and finally the constraints to the theory putting into practice will be brought out in order to determine whether secession could provide an adequate and acceptable solution to the conflict and would the Cypriots communities accept it.

### **4.1. The conditions of secession to occur in Cyprus**

When examining again the conditions necessary for secession to occur and comparing them with the events and the current situation in Cyprus, it can be argued that most of these elements have been present in the island. Firstly, the Republic of Cyprus when it gained independence in 1960 was a multinational state as there were two major communities holding strong ethnic group identification and differing clearly from each other by language, cultural heritage, religion, desires and ancestry (Morelli 2019, 10). Also the Turkish Cypriots as the minority of the

population were afraid of being dominated by the Greek Cypriots and after the constitutional amendments and the emergence of intercommunal violence, became concerned about their safety (Solomonides 2008, 67). Secondly, although before the outbreak of violence, the communities used to live in rather mixed neighbourhoods, they were politically and culturally separated due to the provisions of the Zurich and London Agreements and after the Turkish military invasion the groups became also physically separated (Solomonides 2008, 66; Vits 2014, 10). Thirdly, the effective leadership bringing together the concerns and desires of the Turkish Cypriots and organising necessary movements was present in Cyprus already before the Zurich and London Agreements, as when the Greek Cypriots began fighting for *enosis* in 1950s, the leaders of the Turkish Cypriots due to the pressure from the community were able (although with help from Turkey) to establish an organisation counterbalancing these actions (Demetriou 2004). Also after the Greek Cypriots were able to enforce changes in the constitution, the leaders of the Turkish Cypriots as a protest and to face the desires of their community, withdrew from the Cypriot government (Vits 2014, 11). Fourthly, the Turkish Cypriots supported secession as they sougheed for greater autonomy, were dissatisfied with the situation due to considering themselves disadvantaged in comparison with the Greek Cypriots and became discontented with the minority status in the society being forced upon them (Solomonides 2008, 65, 69). The support for secession has become even stronger due to the extended separation and continuous impasse in the negotiation process as the Turkish Cypriots have get used to greater autonomy over their internal affairs and thus might find the limited sovereignty dissatisfying (Morelli 2019, 24-26; Solomonides 2008, 72). The fifth condition is not entirely met, since although with the existence of strong external support from Turkey, the Turkish Cypriots were unsuccessful in forcing the Republic of Cyprus to recognise their right of self-determination and gain international support for secession and thus have remained in despite of several efforts diplomatically and economically isolated (Bartkus 1999, 159-161).

## **4.2. The key issues revised**

In the conduct of the negotiations held under the framework of bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, some main key issues have yet remained unsolved. Successful secession and thereby granting the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus international recognition could in many ways alter these issues by bringing about solutions but also new challenges.

Regarding the issues of Governance and Power Sharing, the sides would be able to pursue governing their part of the territory in the way most suitable to their values, culture and acceptable to their communities and thus would not be forced to share the power and could exercise full not limited sovereignty and jurisdiction within their state borders (Pavkovic, Radan 2007, 9, 28). Besides that, international recognition would end the diplomatic isolation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus which might provide it with access to the international and supra-national organisations (including membership of the European Union) and become less dependent and under the influence of Turkey (Bartkus 1999, 162).

In terms of the issues concerning Citizenship, successful secession would allow the two states make the decisions regarding this matter separately. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus could determine if and how many Turkish settlers would be allowed to stay on the territory under their jurisdiction and set the limits and conditions for getting the citizenship of the seceded state. Also if the territorial adjustments and property issues would be agreed and by that the sizes of the two states fixed preceding granting the Turkish Cypriots full self-determination, the Greek Cypriots might become less concerned about the increasing amount of the mainland Turks in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus leading to alterations in the borderline (Morelli 2019, 31).

Regarding the problems in relation to the issues of Territorial Adjustments and Property, the sides would have to come to an agreement on how the territory of the island should be divided by the two states (whether the border should remain fundamentally the same as determined by the Green Line currently separating the communities or should the Turkish Cypriots return some regions to the Greek Cypriots) and establish measures of compensation for the people whose property will stay under the jurisdiction of the other state (Solominides 2008, 73). According to Ker-Lindsay (2014, 33-40), secession and granting the Turkish Cypriots full self-determination would be more acceptable for the Greek Cypriots if some parts of the territory (especially the regions of Famagusta and Morphou), which have had great cultural and economic significance to their community, would be returned. Also as these areas used to be mainly inhabited by the Greek Cypriots, giving these regions back would decrease the number of people entitled for compensation and allow some of the uprooted people to reclaim their lost properties (Ker-Lindsay 2014, 40).

Concerning the issues under the chapter of Economy, secession could bring many possibilities for both communities and offer solution to some unresolved matters. There would be no need for

creating special financial institutions and integrating the economies of the two states since the federation would not be established (Morelli 2019, 34). Also the economically more advanced Greek Cypriots would not be compelled to finance the Turkish Cypriots for reducing the economic gap as in case of establishing federation they have afraid of being forced to (Sözen 2012, 120). Besides that, if the regions of Famagusta and Morphou were returned, the Greek Cypriots could regain economically valuable areas and use them for financial profit (Ker-Lindsay 2014, 34). After gaining international recognition the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus could get access to multilateral assistance programmes and financial aid limited only to the sovereign states, and would be able to establish improved trade relations (Bartkus 1999, 162-203). Moreover, the sovereign statehood could also provide the Turkish Cypriots access to the benefits of the international markets and membership of supra-national organisations and free trade regions and become less dependent on Turkey (Bartkus 1999, 95, 161). However, in case of secession, the two states would still have to come to an arrangement on how to compensate for the lost properties and from which resources it should be financed.

Regarding the issues of Security and Guarantees, successful secession could offer the Republic of Northern Cyprus greater opportunities for defending itself by being granted with the right of using force for self-defence in case of violent actions against their sovereignty and the mutual recognition for territorial integrity prohibits in most cases military intervention in other state's internal affairs (Bartkus 1999, 209). Sovereign statehood would also provide the Turkish Cypriots access to membership of international security arrangement organisations (Bartkus 1999, 189-191). This all could help to decrease the concerns of the Turkish Cypriots regarding their security and make them less dependent on the security guarantees and military forces provided by Turkey. Besides that, recognising the sovereignty of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus could also eliminate some concerns of the Greek Cypriots since in case the island remains officially separated, they might be able to achieve abolishment of the Treaty of Guarantee and by that ensure that no third countries would be allowed to intervene in their internal affairs (Morelli 2019, 32). Moreover, if the sovereign statehood would make the Turkish Cypriots secure enough, it might lead to the withdrawal of the Turkish military forces and even greater decline in the influence of Turkey which is a prospect long desired by the Greek Cypriots and perceived to increase their security (Morelli 2019, 32).



### **4.3. Factors supporting secession in Cyprus**

There are also other factors supporting secession in Cyprus besides the previously brought out benefits such as allowing the both states exercise full not limited sovereignty over their territory, make decisions separately and govern in the way best suitable for their respective communities; enable the Turkish Cypriots access to the global markets, financial aid and privileges of the membership of international organisations and free trade regions; decrease the security concerns for the both communities and bring economic benefits not only to the Turkish but also to the Greek Cypriots.

One additional factor supporting secession in Cyprus is that it could improve the international peace, decrease tensions in the region and between the “Mother States” and enhance the NATO-EU relations since although neither of the sides is satisfied with the current situation, physical separation of the island and belligerent parties has so far been successful in preventing further inter-communal violence and bringing relative peace to the island, which could indicate that secession might be a valid solution to the conflict (Solomonides 2008, 68-70). Also granting the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus international recognition could in despite of being perceived as acceptance of defeat, offer a solution to the long-lasting conflict which can be claimed owing to several failed attempts and endless negotiations unattainable under the framework of bi-zonal and bi-communal federation.

Secession and as a consequence of it the possible decrease in Turkish Cypriots’ dependence on Turkey might be also beneficial to Turkey itself. According to Bartkus (1999, 161-163), more than half of the budget of the Northern Cyprus is financed by Turkey. If the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus gained international recognition and by that had access to global markets and financial aid, it would allow Turkey to reduce subsidising Turkish Cypriots and use its resources in other areas. Besides that, although the recent developments in Turkey give reason to believe the accession of Turkey to the European Union questionable, reduced influence on Turkish Cypriots and withdrawal of its forces could improve the relations between Turkey and EU (Dağlı 2017).

#### **4.4. Constraints to secession in Cyprus**

There are also some significant constraints to the two-state solution and by that, carrying out successful secession in Cyprus besides the already brought out challenges regarding the possible future borderline between the Cypriot states and the arrangements and financing of compensation for the lost properties.

Probably the most significant constraint to secession in Cyprus is the strong opposition of the Greek Cypriots. As was previously stated, the Greek Cypriots tend to favour a strongly centralised state unifying the whole island where they as the majority of the population would enjoy bigger share of power while the Turkish Cypriots have to acknowledge their status of a minority (Vits 2014, 63; Beyatlı et al. 2011, 19-20). Besides that, the Greek Cypriots still feel great injustice towards the Turkish military intervention in 1974 since not only many people were forced to leave their homes, it also violated their territorial integrity and human rights and deprived the community of some economically and culturally significant areas (Ker-Lindsay 2014, 37; Hadjipavlou 2010, 87). Moreover, the Greek Cypriots already have once in 1950s refused granting the Turkish Cypriots full self-determination (Security Council Report 2008). In spite of that, due to the continuous impasse in the negotiations, more than one leader of the Greek Cypriots has suggested changes in the framework and it has been even indicated that secession could be acceptable if the regions of Famagusta and Morphou were to returned to the Greek Cypriots (Morelli 2019, 23-26; Ker-Lindsay 2014, 40). However, it is still rather unlikely that the Greek Cypriots would accept a solution, which would irretrievably preclude the chance of gaining power over the seceded territory, lead to permanent deprivation of property and legitimise the military intervention carried out in 1974 by Turkey (Beyatlı et al. 2011, 19-20; Solomonides 2008, 73).

Another constraint to secession in Cyprus is the international opposition to it and the question of legality of the Turkish Cypriots' right to self-determination. When the Turkish Cypriots declared independence in 1983, only Turkey extended diplomatic recognition to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus since the majority of sovereign states have remained to recognise the jurisdiction of the Republic of Cyprus over the territory of the entire island (Security Council Report 2008). Also the only solution acceptable in Cyprus to the international community has seemed to be unifying the island under the parameters of bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, which has led to opposing the calls for change in the framework and the Security Council of the

United Nations has declared the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus illegal (Ker-Lindsay 2014, 37; Security Council Report 2008)

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of the thesis was to provide an overview of secession as a method of ethnic conflict regulation and measure of achieving sustainable peace in Cyprus. At the time of writing the thesis, the physical separation of the island had lasted for 45 years and offered several challenges to the Cypriot communities, the guarantor countries, neighbouring states and international organisations. In despite of many efforts and long-lasting negotiations, the framework of bi-zonal and bi-communal federation imposed by the United Nations has not only so far been unsuccessful in leading to comprehensive solution acceptable for all parties but also caused standstill in the current peace talks. As a consequence, secession as an alternative approach to the federalisation, has become more frequently discussed and suggested method for breaking deadlock of the negotiations and helping the sides to reach to an agreement and by that solving the conflict. The scholars and social scientists, who have done research on this approach, have found that secession can be an instrument for ending successfully inter-communal violence and promoting peace and be beneficial for the seceding and existing states. Therefore, the thesis aimed to test whether secession would be successful also in case of Cyprus by providing answers to the established research questions: could secession be successful in overcoming the impasse in the current negotiation process and offer a comprehensive and attainable solution to the long-lasting conflict; and will the Cypriot communities accept secession as a method of conflict regulation in Cyprus.

The Cyprus conflict emerged between the Cypriot communities during the constitutional crisis in 1963, which led to escalated inter-communal violence and culminated with Turkish military intervention and separation of the island in 1974. Nevertheless, there were also other parties involved in the conflict such as the guarantor powers (Greece, Turkey, United Kingdom), the United States, the United Nations and European Union. Due to the international dimension of the conflict, the strategic location of the island and its natural resources, settlement was argued to enhance stability in the region and improve relations between the parties and secure the energy supply. However, it was discovered that there were several internal factors, ramifications of Zurich and London Agreements, actions of the guarantor powers and international community and the side-effects of the peacekeeping posing obstacles for the peace settlement. The author

also studied the unresolved key issues, which settlement has been stated to be essential for solving the conflict, and brought out the positions of the parties in these matters in order to offer a better insight into the dispute.

In the next chapter of the thesis, the conflict resolution attempts under the parameter of bi-zonal, bi-communal federation were investigated for giving an overview and determining the reasons which caused the current negotiations to end in stalemate and led to indications that this approach has become exhausted and consequently induced to suggestions for change in the framework. It was discovered that although the sides have been able to from time to time achieve progress in some areas (mainly in EU matters, economy and governance), there are many sensitive issues (such as power sharing, citizenship, territorial adjustments, property and security guarantees) in which the deep-rooted differences of the positions of the parties have hindered making necessary concessions and posed constraints to the peace talks. The impasse in the negotiations was observed to be caused by the reluctance of the sides to alter their positions, lack of mutual trust and political will and has led the both communities to consider alternative solutions and frustrated some members of the Security Council.

In order to offer the basis for testing the theory of secession in Cyprus and answering the two research questions, the author studied closely in the third part of the thesis, the literature and research on this concept and brought out possible benefits, but also challenges and conditions, which have been argued to be necessary for secession to occur. It was discovered that although secession has many downsides regarding the security and economic issues and is often perceived as a negative phenomenon, considered illegal and opposed by the host states as well as the international community, it also has been argued to be successful in putting an end to inter-communal violence and ethnic discrimination, providing the parties with several benefits and leading to sustainable peace and stability. In addition, the author was able to determine the five elements necessary for secessionist movements to occur: the existence of a community distinctive by its characteristics and strong group identification dominated by the other community in a multinational state; physical and/or political segregation of the communities; the presence of effective leadership; support for secession and discontentment with the situation in the distinct community; and in case of successful secession, the host state being forced and the international community willing to recognise the sovereignty of the seceded state.

In the final chapter, the author sought to test the theory of secession in Cyprus by first determining whether the elements vital for the self-determination movements to occur, existed on the island, then revising the unresolved key issues under the framework of secession and finally presenting factors supporting partition along with the constraints to applying this theory in Cyprus. On the bases of the findings, the author sought to determine whether secession would be successful in Cyprus and provide answers to the established research questions. It was discovered that most of the conditions necessary for secession to occur were in fact present in Cyprus, apart from the official recognition as the Turkish Cypriots in despite of several efforts and support from Turkey, have been so far unsuccessful in forcing the Republic of Cyprus and achieving the international community to recognise the sovereignty of the Republic of Northern Cyprus. When revising the key issues, it became clear that although under certain conditions, secession could offer solution to most of these matters, it might also lead to new challenges. The author found several benefits, which applying secession in Cyprus could bring to the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, international community, the region and Turkey, but also many constraints strongly opposing secession in Cyprus.

The observations led to a conclusion that although some issues would remain unsolved and thus need further discussion, granting the Turkish Cypriots full self-determination and international recognition could in general bring many benefits to the both communities as well as to the international community, offer solutions to the several key issues and as the physical separation of the belligerent parties has already proven to prevent further inter-communal violence, it can be stated that secession might be a valid, though not ideal solution to the conflict. However, it was discovered that in despite of suggestions for change in the framework and indications of acceptance of the independence of Turkish Cypriots in return for gaining back regions of Famagusta and Morphou, many Greek Cypriots still desire unification of the island under their conditions and feel strong injustice towards the events in 1974 and thus would not agree with a solution leading to permanent loss of territory and properties in the north and legitimise the Turkish military intervention.

Therefore it can be concluded that although secession as a method of conflict regulation in Cyprus might be successful in breaking deadlock of the current peace talks, facilitate reaching to an agreement and is supported by the Turkish Cypriots and their political elites, it is still rather unlikely that the Greek Cypriots would accept the two-state solution. As a result, while secession could lead to comprehensive solution it might not be yet entirely attainable.

However, as the peace process in despite of current stalemate still continues in Cyprus, it remains yet to be seen what new developments might occur and by that if, when and how the conflict will be solved. There are also many other aspects in the Cyprus conflict, which need to be analysed and not all were covered by this thesis, thus solving the conflict could benefit from further discussion.

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