
POSITION PAPER (II)

regarding the legal status of Universities in North Cyprus (TRNC)

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Introduction

This position paper concerns objections regarding the status of higher education institutions in the TRNC raised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Greek Cypriot administration, as expressed in a letter (dated 24 October 2005) to all Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Greek Cypriot administration.

The objections raised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the the Greek Cypriot administration concern four primary areas:

- (1) the legal status of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus;
- (2) the legal status of Eastern Mediterranean University ;
- (3) the legal status of the land on which Eastern Mediterranean University is situated.

It is our position that these objections have no foundation in fact or in law, and that they are being made against the spirit of UN declarations and the educational principles laid down by the European Commission in the charters of the European University Association (EUA), the SOCRATES-Erasmus programs, etc.

(1) The legal status of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

In the letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, it is claimed that the aim of UNSCR 541 and 550 is to call upon all states not to facilitate or in any way assist the TRNC. This letter cites United Nations Security Council Resolutions as follows:

UNSCR 541 (1983) Calls upon all the states not to recognize any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus

UNSCR 550 (1984) Reiterates the call upon all states not to recognize the purported state of the TRNC set up by secessionist acts and calls upon them not to facilitate or in any way assist the aforesaid secessionist entity.

It is clear that the main aim of UNSCR 541 and 550 is to prevent any secessionist acts and recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. However, these resolutions do not constitute a legal ground for ignore or denying either the existence or the right of self-determination of the Turkish Cypriot Community as one of two co-founders of the Republic of Cyprus based on the London and Zurich Accords of 1959 and the 1960 Constitution of the Republic.

Under the provisions of the Constitution (Article 87, the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, 1960), which is held as valid in the Republic of Cyprus, each of the two communities was granted separate autonomy, among other things, in the administration of its own affairs, in particular those related to culture, religion and education. Following the well-documented destruction of the constitutional order by the Greek Cypriots in 1963 with the aim of annexing the island of Cyprus to Greece (ENOSIS), the two politically equal co-partner communities developed separate administrations on the island, and the Turkish Cypriot community, exercising its right to self-determination and sovereignty, has evolved administratively into a de facto, independent, democratic entity. In addition, Greek Cypriot sovereignty over the island effectively stops at the United Nations Buffer Zone (Green Line) which was established by Great Britain in 1963 and legitimized by the UN in 1964 in order to protect the Turkish Cypriots from subjugation. At present, all negotiations and agreements under UN auspices to reach a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus conflict are therefore based on a bi-communal and bizonal model.

On the other hand, through the April 2004 referenda, the Turkish Cypriots demonstrated that they are in favor of peace and a just settlement in Cyprus, and thus, that they can no longer be held responsible for the impasse that continues to exist. Indeed, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his report to the Security Council on 28 May 2004 (*see* para. 93 of document S/2004/437) indicates the need to lift all the restrictions on the Turkish Cypriot community.

The decision of the Turkish Cypriots is to be welcomed. The Turkish Cypriot leadership and Turkey have made clear their respect for the wish of the Turkish Cypriots to reunify in a bicomunal, bizonal federation. The Turkish Cypriot vote has undone any rationale for pressuring and isolating them. I would hope that the members of the Council can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies, to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development not for the purposes of affording recognition or assisting secession, but as a positive contribution to the goal of reunification.

Furthermore, the EU Commission, in its April 2004 “Proposal for a Council Regulation,” invites the European Council to extend direct aid for the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community, and for the purpose of bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the European Union (*see* the attached article 2 of the Council Regulation Proposal), as follows:

The Turkish Cypriot community have expressed their clear desire for a future within the European Union. The Council is determined to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community. Besides reconciliation and confidence building measures, it will cover, inter alia, the promotion of social and economic development, development of the infrastructure, and people to people contacts. Most of the activities will be therefore

*similar to pre-accession activities. Due to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community over the last years, the activities will have a strong focus on helping with *acquis approximation*, especially as regards investments to comply with European norms, inter alia, in the environmental and transport areas.*

Despite the fact that the EU considers them European citizens, Turkish Cypriots find themselves denied representation, as well as access to educational facilities and opportunities open to other European citizens because they are being forced, against all the principles recognized by the EU prior to and since the referenda, to submit to the authority of the Greek Cypriot government. Thus, the Turkish Cypriots, European citizens, are being denied their basic human rights, beginning with their right of self-determination. Since the establishment of the partnership Republic of Cyprus (ROC) in 1960, issues of education, culture and religious affairs have always been within the competence of Turkish Cypriot authorities and the Greek Cypriot authorities separately. The constitution of the ROC clearly enumerated these areas within the competence of community chambers (Article 87).

With regard to the statutes of the higher education institutions of TRNC, one must look at the guiding principles of the 1960 Constitution that provides for political equality between the two communities. The constitution contains many checks and balances to maintain the political equality of the two communities. The system of the 1960 Constitution was based on the shared executive power of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities; and as a matter of fact under this system, the separate communal chambers have competence to exercise their executive power separately in matters related to religious affairs and cultural and educational issues (Article 87, Constitution of ROC, 1960).

The legal interpretation of the spirit of the Constitution cannot change even if we assume that the natural and cultural heritage is one of the common and fundamental matters of state such as defence, foreign policy, or taxation, and should be governed under the organs of the public service. In addition it is not possible to claim that the sole competent authority of higher education is the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Greek Cypriot administration: “As to the 1960 Constitution, the public service shall be composed as to seventy per cent of Greek Cypriots and as to thirty per cent of Turkish Cypriots. Any decisions taken by the agency in the Greek Cypriot community is not legally binding without participation of the Turkish Cypriots up to 30 per cent into the public service.” (Article 123, Constitution of ROC, 1960).

Since the inter-communal conflict in 1963 that led to the collapse of the partnership Republic, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots have been governed under separate administrations where each have conducted educational affairs in practice, respectively, within their administrative bodies. This de facto practice has been legally acknowledged in a wider scope by Greece and the United Kingdom with the conclusion of the 30 July 1974 Geneva Declaration, which recognizes “the existence in practice in the Republic of Cyprus of two autonomous administrations that of Greek Cypriot Community and that of the Turkish Cypriot Community” (Para. 5).

By and large this practice has continued to exist, and is confirmed once more by the “Annan Plan.” In the final version of the Annan Plan which was submitted to separate and simultaneous referenda on 24 April 2004, educational matters were vested in the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot Constituent States. Article 15 of the proposed constitution of the “United Cyprus Republic” provided that “the constituent states shall, within the limits of this Constitution, sovereignly exercise within their territorial boundaries all competences and functions not vested by this Constitution in the federal government” and the relevant article did not enumerate educational matters within the competence of the federal government. Moreover, the same

constitution recognized the right of each constituent state to appoint representatives and conclude agreements on various matters including educational (Art. 18, para. 3 and 4, footnotes 16 and 18) representation.

Again, the basic legal document on Cyprus with regard to EU law is the Treaty of Accession signed on 16 April 2003, and particularly its Protocol 10. This Protocol has suspended the application of the EU *acquis* in north Cyprus pending a comprehensive solution. But Article 3 provides that “nothing in this Protocol shall preclude measures with a view to promoting the economic development of” North Cyprus.

Eastern Mediterranean University believes that Turkish Cypriots have sound legal reasons not to accept the Greek Cypriot administration as legally representing the whole island and the Turkish Cypriot people. We base this on the following three arguments:

i) The acceptance of the Greek Cypriot Administration as the legal government of the Republic of Cyprus has long been based on the argument of “state of necessity,” referring to the abnormal situation on the Island. An institution cannot claim a state of necessity as the basis for its actions if the institution contributes to the continuation of the abnormal situation. The Greek Cypriot people as well as the Greek Cypriot Administration refused to accept the basic framework for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem in the April 2004 referendum, and in so doing, they have prevented the establishment of a new state of affairs on the Island and the termination of the abnormal situation. Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots have given their consent for the establishment of a new and internationally acceptable state of affairs. Therefore, this argument can no longer be legitimate grounds for supporting the position taken by the Greek Cypriot Administration that it is the legal government of the whole island with the full authority to represent Turkish Cypriots.

ii) In the case of a “double yes” from the two sides in the April 2004 referendums, the Foundation Agreement and its annexes would have entered into force and a new state (entailing a new state of affairs) would have been established. Since it has recognized the right of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots to determine the future state of affairs on the island upon an equal footing, and has accepted the two sides’ separate inherent constitutive powers as confirmed by separate simultaneous referenda, the EU and its organs and institutions are now acting inconsistently by granting Greek Cypriots the privilege to act as the sole legal actor of the current state of affairs. Since the “common will” of Cypriots has been exercised separately, the international community must find ways to avoid the subjugation of the Turkish Cypriot will to the Greek Cypriot will. Therefore, for a European organization to ask a Turkish Cypriot university to submit to the will of the Greek Cypriot government by considering it as the legal government of Cyprus and requiring recognition by one of its organs is entirely contrary to the reality revealed in the referenda held in the north and south of Cyprus on 24 April 2004; it represents a policy of discrimination against the Turkish Cypriots, and a contradictory denial of the EU’s recognition of Turkish Cypriots’ rights in its official statements both prior to and since the referenda.

iii) EU institutions have expressed their support for the economic development of Turkish Cypriots and to reduce economic disparities between the two sides in Cyprus in order to facilitate and contribute to an enduring solution. Increasing the economic capacity of the Turkish Cypriots is directly related to promoting the economic

development of North Cyprus where this population lives and administers its institutions, as revealed in the wording of Commission and Council decisions.

Thus on 26 April 2004 the Council stated, “The Council is determined to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community... The Council recommended that the 259 million euro already earmarked for the northern part of Cyprus in the event of a settlement now be used for this purpose.” Again, it was stated in 12-13 December 2002 Copenhagen Conclusions that the European Council invited “the Commission [...] to consider ways of promoting economic development of northern part of Cyprus and bringing it closer to the Union”.

Since the Turkish Cypriot universities’ activities are vital for the economic life of North Cyprus in addition to trade and tourism, and since this soil is an area in which all EU citizens and goods can freely and legally enter through Turkish Cypriot ports under the provisions of the “Green Line Regulation,” Turkish Cypriot universities should have the right to be accepted into the EU higher educational system, independent of the recognition of the Greek Cypriot authorities, provided that these universities fulfill the objective criteria within that system.

(2) The legal status of Eastern Mediterranean University

In this context, one objection raised in the letter concerns visits by foreign diplomats to universities in the TRNC. The letter claims that:

“...the occupation regime has sought to exploit these visits, through public statements and lengthy press reports, for the sole purpose of promoting its illegal secessionist aims....”

This objection is without substance. The Turkish Cypriot administration, representing a population of over 200,000 people, is a functioning, democratically elected government that includes a parliament, an independent judiciary and all other institutions of sovereign territorial administration such as municipalities, public and private health facilities, tax offices, schools and universities.

The EU Commission, in article 1 of its April 2004 “Proposal for a Council Regulation,” considers local authorities, cooperatives and representatives of the civil society, business support organisations, public agencies, public administrations, local or traditional communities, associations, foundations, non-profit organisations, non-governmental organizations, which were founded under the laws of TRNC, as beneficiaries of the financial support.

As one of the foundations established in North Cyprus, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), the largest and most established university of Cyprus was established in 1979, and over the past twenty-five years has acquired a sound international reputation. In terms of its student population, the modernity of its facilities and the quality and diversity of its programs, its growth and accomplishments have been extraordinary.

Eastern Mediterranean University’s work has been recognized in the European context through its acceptance as a full individual member of the European University Association (EUA) since April 2005. Moreover, EMU’s application for full institutional membership in the UNESCO-affiliated International Association of Universities (IAU) was accepted by the IAU Administrative

Board at its 69th meeting held in Alexandria (Egypt) in November 2005. In its acceptance letter dated 1 December 2005, the Executive Director of the IAU, Ms. Eva Egron-Polak, stated:

“As you know, one of the aspects reviewed by the IAU Administrative Board is the national recognition of all applying institutions. This has been a stumbling block in the past with regard to institutions from Northern Cyprus, given that IAU, an NGO with close formal relations with UNESCO, had applied UN rules in this matter. After renewed deliberations in Alexandria, the IAU Administrative Board decided to admit the Eastern Mediterranean University to membership in IAU, in full recognition of its fulfilment of all academic criteria.”

The University currently has 37 undergraduate and 35 postgraduate programs; and to date, EMU has graduated some 21,000 students, who are now successfully pursuing careers or graduate studies both at home and abroad. EMU comprises 7 Faculties and 3 Schools, offering 41 four-year Bachelor's, 8 two-year Associate, 24 Master's, and 14 Ph.D. degree programs—all granted official equivalency by the Education Ministries of 8 countries and accepted by many others. EMU has developed frameworks for collaboration and mobility with 84 universities in 30 countries (12 in the EU).

EMU's academic units have additional affiliations—e.g. EMU's Architecture Faculty is a member of EAAE (European Association for Architectural Education) and ENHR (European Network for Housing Research); the Tourism School is an approved Edexcel Center and is TEDQUAL certified; the School of Foreign Languages was the first accredited center in Cyprus for Cambridge (UCLES) teacher training courses; the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering programs have met ABET's substantial equivalency requirements; EMU's Computer Center is the only authorized testing center and Cyprus representative of VUE-Pearson, and is the authorized Regional Cisco Networking Academy. All of our diplomas are recognized through our protocol with Central Connecticut State University; our programs in Engineering have received additional accreditation from the Pakistan Engineering Council; the Department of International Relations has developed a collaboration protocol with the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz, and the Department of History has developed a protocol with the University of Erfurt, in Germany. The university is moving to develop academic and administrative accreditation under ISO 9001, and each program offered at EMU will work to seek relevant international accreditation in its area.

Work is being done in the Department of Electrical Engineering (which is IEEE-affiliated) with international companies and all universities in North Cyprus to establish a Technopark for hi-tech R&D. In Computer Engineering, cross-language information retrieval research is being developed within the 6th Framework, under the Turkish Informatics Foundation pending EU funding; other projects are underway with American and Russian institutions. There are joint Ph.D. supervisions between EMU's Chemistry Department and the Max Planck Institute; a gene therapy project is in progress with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada. Mathematics research is being carried out with the Swedish National Research Council. In the Business & Economics Faculty, staff are involved in projects funded by AMIDEAST, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, UNOPS/CRANET, and the EU Commission. In Communication & Media Studies, World Bank policy papers are being developed and staff are working on bicommunal projects with UNOPS/the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus. The Architecture Faculty is involved in other UNOPS/bicommunal/EU projects on the built environment. In Education, staff are involved in the International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sports & Dance. In the History Department, research is in progress under the aegis of the European Centre for Minority Issues. For students, many merit- and need-based scholarships have been created at EMU, and other funds are available from external sources.

Opportunities for mobility have been created: in Art History, a student scholarship has been set up for the British Institute of Florence; in Tourism, AMADEUS/FIDELIO programs and USEH internships have been developed. The Industrial Engineering Club is the only Cyprus member of ESTIEM (European Students of Industrial Engineering and Management). EMU has been involved since 1992 in AIESEC (Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales). An EMU student group worked to establish AEGEE-Magusa (Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe); since 1997, more than 140 European students have been hosted by AEGEE-Magusa, and 35 EMU students have participated.

Nationally, EMU is committed to its role as a major force for helping in the economic and cultural development of the Turkish Cypriot people, and to striving to move beyond the country's political impasse by extending offers of friendship, partnership, sharing of intellectual resources and mobility to institutions throughout Cyprus. In the north, EMU has signed protocols with 3 other universities and opened its facilities to them. Viewing quality in higher education not simply in terms of teaching and research/development but also as providing service to the community, EMU has this year started several projects to benefit Cyprus as a whole: a Center for Continuing Education that is developing evening classes and Distance Learning/certification programs, a Center for Technology Development & Industrial Relations, and a Center for Endowment Fund & Project Development. EMU's TV and Radio stations are creating educational programs in English, Greek, and Turkish; information is shared in public meetings; and EMU's library facilities are open to the public. EMU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic status, sex, gender, disability unrelated to job or program requirements, marital status, age, or religious or political beliefs, in its educational, financial or employment policies, programs or activities. The university is helping the country on environmental, political, and cultural levels: the university provides consultancies to government, the municipality, and local businesses/industries; and is developing joint projects through its departments and 21 research centers in many public sector areas: environmental management, earthquake studies, drainage, traffic, tourism, technological development, cultural heritage preservation, gender equality, and developing a just settlement of the Cyprus issue.

Internationally, because of the multicultural character of its staff and student population and its experience of regional problems and issues—ethnic conflicts, small-island economies, water resources, pollution, energy conservation, solar power—EMU is committed to further diversifying its student and staff population, and to serving both as a bridge between European and other cultures and as a force for change, development and modernization in the region; while helping preserve the natural environment and respecting the needs and values of indigenous/local cultures and traditions. EMU has joint conferences, lectures and visiting appointments with regional universities and is in contact with the Culture Ministries of several regional countries and Greek Cypriot institutions with the aim of creating joint projects—e.g. social sciences databases and think tanks to address issues such as cultural sustainability, the place of religion in society, leadership, gender and minority rights—to transform the idea of a “clash of civilizations” to that of a “consensus of civilizations” that recognizes the contribution of all cultures to the world's heritage and promotes understanding, tolerance, and peaceful, mutually beneficial coexistence.

Above all, EMU believes it is our mission to inculcate in our students, whatever their origins or affiliations, an informed understanding of principles of democracy and tolerance and a mature sense of responsibility, so that as educated citizens, they can contribute positively to the peaceful coexistence of all peoples and the progress of society in today's increasingly pluralistic and cosmopolitan world. It is for this reason too, that despite the obstacles and restrictions imposed

on North Cyprus by the international community, EMU's academics are striving with determination as teachers and scholars to battle with events and circumstances that are unfortunately beyond its control, working to contribute to the development of the whole of Cyprus and educate the youth in the importance of these values.

The main obstacle to EMU's efforts to educate its students, facilitate research and development, and provide service to the community has been the 42 years of isolation and exclusion caused by the non-recognition of North Cyprus; and our staff and students have constantly been struggling to overcome the resulting problems in education and in the community. Despite these efforts, the educational consequences of the international isolation of North Cyprus have been serious: the lack of free movement of students and staff and has constrained and deprived them of academic freedom, exchange of ideas, international competition and intercultural experience; there has been political obstruction of academic cooperation agreements, research and development projects, and funding which would benefit students, staff, the people of Cyprus and the region.

EMU shares a common educational vision and philosophy with our colleagues in Europe: EMU desires scholarly collaboration in research, training, exchange programs, publications, technology development, and culture; and the freedom of movement to pursue these aims. The detrimental psychological effect of isolation and exclusion on staff and students has increased the difficulty of our struggle to mediate between cultures, promote European ideals, and participate in the European knowledge society. It is our hope that with the new understanding that has emerged in Europe since the April 2004 referenda, the removal of impediments to scholarly interchange will facilitate the realization of our shared vision and ideals, and help foster an environment of peace and cooperation in Cyprus.

(3) The legal status of the land on which Eastern Mediterranean University has been situated

In its letter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the the Greek Cypriot administration states:

“Moreover, these universities use as their premises illegally usurped properties belonging to Greek Cypriot forcibly displaced persons, in violation of their rights and without their consent....”

The letter also cites the decision of the ECHR regarding the admissibility of the case *Saveriades v. Turkey*, and claims that Eastern Mediterranean University is situated on a Greek Cypriot property and infringes the right for use and enjoyment of property.

In fact, the ECHR decided only on the admissibility of the application, and did not give a judgment on the case of *Saveriades v. Turkey*.

Following the April 2004 referenda, the Turkish Cypriots demonstrated that they remain committed to the efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem on the basis of bizonality. Reaching a settlement on the property issue alone is not a substitute for an agreement; an agreement on the comprehensive settlement has to be reached to establish a new state in Cyprus based on “political equality and respect for each other's distinct identity.” In particular, the lifting of all restrictions on residence and the right of return have to be balanced by safeguard measures to protect the identity of each constituent state and the human rights of the current users of the property.

Property rights have always been the subject of intercommunal talks under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. Unilateral implementation of the critically important provisions on territorial adjustment, property compensation, and reinstatement of property is not possible for the Turkish Cypriots in the absence of agreed administrative arrangements and the establishment of funds for developmental and infrastructural projects designed to assist in the process of readjustment subsequent to a settlement.

In its decision on the case of *Xenides-Arestis v. Turkey*, the ECHR did not rule for compensation, and concluded that a remedy should be introduced to be adopted in Turkey's domestic legal order to put an end to the violation. However, the ECHR underlined that the respondent State remains free to choose the means by which it will discharge its legal obligation under Article 46 of the Convention, on the condition that such means are compatible with the conclusions set out in the Court's judgment. Furthermore, the court decided to suspend all pending cases related to property disputes in Cyprus brought against Turkey, subject to effectiveness of the new remedy.

In this regard, the Turkish Cypriot authorities took an essential step by enacting a new law for compensation, exchange and restitution of properties; and put into force a law for the creation of a property commission based on this law that would consider Greek Cypriot property claims to solve property disputes in accordance with international law, respect for the individual rights of dispossessed owners and current users, and the principle of bi-zonality.

The Greek Cypriot arguments regarding the status of EMU's premises are without substance. As to the general principle of the law, in the first place there must be a presumption of innocence in the absence of any proof of guilt. Although the Greek Cypriot administration accuses EMU of being an illegal entity, so far there is no court decision that has convicted EMU for any violation of the pertinent articles of the European Convention on Human Rights. And according to the principles of international law, neither the suppression of basic human rights nor human rights without limits are acceptable and authorized. The UN has therefore been pursuing a policy aimed at establishing a balance between the individual's right to property and the principle of bizonality in a Cyprus settlement.

Effectively, loss of property ownership for the purpose of protecting the public interest is considered as legitimate in international law. In fact, such interventions are explicitly recognized in Protocol No. 1 of the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights provided this is done in the "public interest" and in accordance with the "general interest." Given that promoting high-quality education is one of the objectives of the European Community, higher education, as one of fundamental public services, should be legally paramount in relation to any individual right in the greater public interest. In the European context, higher education plays a central role in the development of both human beings and modern societies, as it enhances social, cultural and economic development, active citizenship, and ethical values. For this reason, it is in the public interest that education not be restricted by any individual application or property dispute, and that academic freedom not be subject to any political constraints.

According to Art. 149 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, the European Union is committed to contributing to the development of quality education, by encouraging cooperation between its member states through a wide range of actions such as promoting the mobility of citizens, designing joint study programs, establishing networks, exchanging information, and teaching the languages of the European Union.

It is our position, as an European institution of higher learning, that campaigns aimed at obstruction and harassment, such as we find in the letter of 24 October 2005 sent to diplomatic

missions by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Greek Cypriot administration, are unethical, and run counter to all principles of academic freedom, in particular to the basic imperative that academic and scholarly activities such as research must be allowed freedom for the purpose of seeking intellectual truth. Academic freedom is a cherished principle of any institution of higher learning. We believe that these principles are embraced by the organizations of the United Nations and the European Union; and we take this position as the oldest and largest university on the island of Cyprus and as an internationally recognized institution with full membership in the International Association of Universities and the European University Association.