

Mr. President, Madame High Commissioner, Dear Colleagues,

Allow me first to express our appreciation to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and the UN Secretary General for producing the report regarding the situation of Human Rights in Cyprus.

It is indeed a pertinent and timely report, and every effort has been made to include the latest developments in the grounds. It is also a sign that the United Nations is seized with this issue – and it is very important that it continues to do so.

Reading carefully the report, though, it leaves us under the impression that we are dealing with the issue of human rights' violations in a country where two communities live peacefully facing some, say, minor problems. It is almost obvious that this country cannot be Cyprus.

As you very well know, the source for the lack of enjoyment of human rights in the case of Cyprus, is the non-resolution of a problem that started 34 years ago, with the invasion of Cyprus by foreign forces and the occupation of almost 40% of the island since then.

The then Commission on Human Rights, recalling plethora of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions since 1974 on this issue, requested the UN Secretary General to deal with the human rights situation in the island and in particular the restoration of human rights and

fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots, indeed, including the freedom of movement, of settlement and the right to property.

Even the report, at the end it mentions, and I quote: “the de facto partition of the island continues to constitute an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights. The situation of Human Rights in Cyprus would greatly benefit from the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus Problem”.

Mr President, Dear colleagues,

this mere fact is not evident in the report, which, while trying to be balanced, omits the very essence of the problem which is the continued occupation of the entire northern part of the island. Needless to say that the report under discussion is not, and never was, “a country mandate” but a specific request by the Commission on Human Rights to monitoring the deterioration of human rights situation due to the 1974 invasion of Cyprus.

Having said that we appreciate the continued interest shown by the international community, the Human Rights’ Commissioner and the Secretary General on the issue and we believe that the above remarks will be taken into account during next year’s drafting of this report. We are also convinced that the efforts of all those involved will bear fruits and Cyprus will be re-united in the near future for the benefit of all its citizens.

Thank you