

## Political Cooperation Experience Between EU and UN Concerning Cyprus Issue (2002-2004)

Yakov Y. Grishin and Aydar S. Mullayanov

Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies,  
Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, Kremlevskaya Street 18, 420008 Kazan, Russia

---

**Abstract:** The study describes the experience of political cooperation between EU and UN concerning the Cyprus problem from 2002-2004. During this period UN initiated a Cyprus settlement and developed “Annan Plan”. In the course of this project practical implementation the interaction of EU and UN formats occurred. This study examines the peculiarities of the phenomenon. Specific facts illustrate the results of international actor interaction in respect of the Cyprus problem.

**Key words:** Cyprus issue, “Annan Plan”, European Union, UN, peculiarities

---

### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the XXIst century, the system of ethno-political conflict in Cyprus showed the signs of improvement. A long-standing Cyprus issue gained the momentum of relevance began to appear within the international agenda. The hopes and expectations related to its potential settlement increased. They came out of the Cyprus situation objective development in the early 2000s.

The Cyprus problem as a subsystem of international relations may be divided into three structural layers:

- The internal layer as inter-community contradictions
- The medium layer as the reflection of the regional confrontation between Greece and Turkey and also internal Cyprus problems
- External layer as the display of influence on internal Cyprus situation and Greek-Turkish relations of extra-regional forces, drawn to a certain extent in the Cyprus conflict (Bredikhin, 2003)

During this period, positive developments have occurred in all layers of the structural problems. The degree of inter-communal conflict reduced significantly in January 2002 to resume direct negotiations between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus (Tocci and Kovziridze, 2005). As the result, Mr. Clerides and R. Denktash held forty-four meetings in July (Christou, 2002).

In February 2002, a signal to relations development between Greece and Turkey was generated by a meeting of foreign ministers of these countries. According to its results the parties agreed to continue the discussion of such complex issues of the bilateral agenda as the problem of territorial waters in the Aegean Sea and the airspace control (Christou, 2002).

Qualitative dynamics outlined in the impact of extra-regional forces on the Cyprus problem. On the one hand, a major impact on it was provided by the United Nations (UN). As you know, the United Nations is the most important external player in Cypriot affairs (Eralp and Beriker, 2005). This status derives from the authority of the organization as an institution of international consensus and a mutually acceptable mediator for both Cypriot communities. The quintessence of the UN activities in Cyprus during the considered period was “Annan plan”-the most detailed and comprehensive Cyprus settlement project (Sommer, 2005).

On the other hand, the European Union could not lose the control in respect of Cyprus conflict. The EU became one of the determining factors of its development after the beginning of the European integration process for Cyprus (Iseri, 2004). During the considered period the process of Cyprus joining to the European Union was at its final stage. This phenomenon influenced the domestic political actors of the Cyprus problem.

In general, during the study period a unique “concert” case of extra-regional players in the Cyprus issue was developed during the study period the UN and the EU. “Annan Plan” became the basis for this phenomenon, around which the interaction of these actors was developed.

### **“ANNAN PLAN”: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS**

UN Panel of Experts developed the project which was aimed at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. The plan of Cypriot antagonism regulation was designed during the period when the UN Secretary General post was held by Kofi Annan. The last large-scale attempt of the UN to put an end to the Cyprus problem became known as “Annan Plan”.

“Annan plan” is the UN product, “good service mission” development. Its leitmotif was the creation of a detailed unified constitution for the members of the Cyprus problem. A draft version of the “Annan Plan” is really striking by its strong specificity, the meticulous attention to all conceivable aspects and the subtle nuances of the Cyprus dispute: it has more than one thousand pages of federal laws, international treaties and agreement projects for the potential “United Cyprus Republic” (Tocci and Kovziridze, 2005).

The official version of the plan is a more concise and specific document. Five versions for the project were presented slightly different from each other (Eralp and Beriker, 2005). The first version of this initiative as the “basis for the agreement on a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem” was presented for the discussion by each of the conflict parties on 11 November 2002. Later the document on the basis of the intercommunal talks had some additions and changes: the following variants of the UN initiative were presented on 10/12/2002, 26/02/2003, 29/03/2004.

One and a half year process of Cypriot settlement under the auspices of the United Nations was crowned by the fifth version of the document. It was completed on March 31, 2004 (Eralp and Beriker, 2005). The final touches to the “Annan plan” were the additions that UN experts completed by 18/04/2004. Finally, on 23rd of April the United Nations presented the final version of the plan to the parties of the Cyprus problem.

The outcome which determined the success or collapse of the project concerning the settlement of the Cyprus problem under the sponsorship of the United Nations, occurred the next day. On 24/04/2004 two separate expression of will among Greek and Turkish Cypriots took place during the referendum. The Turks of Cyprus by a large majority of the votes (65%) approved the project of a unified Cypriot state while only 24% of the Greek voters supported the “Annan plan” (Eralp and Beriker, 2005).

As a result, a year and half search for a mutually beneficial compromise for direct antagonists of the Cyprus problem under the mediation of the United

Nations did not lead to its resolution. The Cyprus status quo as a divided state preserved. An insurmountable obstacle for the opinion of one of the conflict parties in our opinion, were the key categories of “Annan Plan”.

### **“ANNAN PLAN”: KEY CATEGORIES**

The main objective of this UN initiative was the creation of the “United Cyprus Republic”. It was assumed that the basic idea of the new unified state of Cyprus will be the principle of political equality of two ethnic island communities (Sommer, 2005). It should be noted that during the development of the document content the UN mediators took into account the results which were attained by the participants of the problem inner layer on the basis of numerous rounds of direct intercommunal talks. The “Annan Plan” text was subject to the meta-principle of the Cyprus settlement form: in the late 1970s, the parties of the Cyprus issue under the mediation of the United Nations agreed on the main goal of the ethnic conflict political regulation within the format of a bicommunal and a bizonal state.

So, the project of the Cyprus problem comprehensive settlement has the following key aspects: The foundations of a united Cyprus state system: an option of a united federal state “United Cyprus Republic” was offered to the parties of the Cyprus problem. Its constituent parts the “Greek-Cypriot state” and “Turkish Cypriot State” endowed with extensive powers, the legal personality of the central government was less significant (Sommer, 2005).

The problem of sovereignty distribution between the federation subjects, the delegation of partial powers by it from the federal government. As the part of the “Annan Plan” the separation of powers was developed at the executive and legislative levels. The legal mechanisms presented in this document contained the algorithm that addressed an acute problem of Turkish Cypriots insufficient representation in the Cyprus government (Sommer, 2005).

The property right, one of three most important categories at the inner layer of the Cyprus problem, along with the right to property and freedom of a settlement (Faustmann, 2004). Thus, the return of 1/5 of the land occupied by Turkish Cypriots in favor of the Greek Cypriot federation subject was planned (Sommer, 2005).

The deficit of mutual tolerance and respect between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, respectively. It was proposed to create a “Regulation commission” to solve this issue (Sommer, 2005).

Demilitarization of the island territory. UN experts offered an option of absolute demilitarization of Cyprus.

As to the location of 25,000 Turkish soldiers on the island there was no option except of radical and gradual reduction of its population to 650 people. It was planned to abolish completely separate armed forces of Greek and Turkish Cypriots respectively (Sommer, 2005).

#### **“ANNAN PLAN”: SENSE RELATION WITH EU**

A characteristic feature of the studied period in the context of the Cyprus problem is an active engagement of its extra-regional actors-the UN and the EU. The content of the “Annan Plan” has the “binding” to the European Union activities. UN peacekeeping initiative at Cyprus could not take into account the dynamics and the results of the process developing in parallel: the European Union in its strategy of its borders expansion, one of the objects of which was the Republic of Cyprus (RC), influenced the Cyprus problem participants. For the EU the joining of RC according to the scheduled date May 1, 2004 as a united country would be a desirable option.

The detailed provisions of the “Annan Plan” could not but take into account the peculiarities of *acquis communautaire*-a generally applicable EU legislation. The lawyers of the United Nations during the development of mechanisms for the resolution of the plan key aspects of harmonized the laws of “United Cyprus Republic” with the EU *acquis*. Thus, the European Union became an integral part of the efforts resolving the Cyprus problem according to “Annan Plan”(Eralp and Beriker, 2005). In order to ensure in this pattern, it is enough to study, the 183-page document where the fate of a Cyprus settlement is related to the process of the island European integration.

#### **“PARALLEL” SCHEDULE OF EU AND UN IN “ANNAN PLAN”**

The parallelism of the EU and the UN political agenda during the period of 2002-2004 manifested in dynamics.

The mediation efforts of the United Nations coincided with the final stage of the European integration of Cyprus. This fact was the real premise of Brussels parallel activities and UN mediators in the Cyprus problem. The logic of the parallelism concerning the joining of Cyprus to the EU and the “Annan Plan” discussion was closely “associated” from the procedural point of view. This pattern was shown in a tight “anchor” of compromise search deadlines by the conflict parties with the process of Cyprus joining to the community.

The above mentioned is illustrated by the following example. Initially it was assumed that the leaders of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities will be able to

reach a consensus within the framework of direct negotiations by July 2002 (Tocci and Kovziridze, 2005). Further as New York and Brussels experts believed, the discussion of Kofi Annan proposals in November 2002 will also be successful. In an ideal scenario, the UN proposals were submitted for a referendum by mid-December. The most positive scenario assumed that the representatives of both communities conflict antagonists find an option of a political settlement on the island in the form of the of “United Cyprus Republic” creation meeting their interests and aspirations and voted for it. Thus, the approval of the “Annan Plan” at the referendum would lead to the consolidation of the legislative unification of Cyprus. The Cyprus problem would be solved. The introduction of a single island in the EU would be a procedural formality: it was planned to invite united Cyprus join the community at the EU summit in Copenhagen (Tocci and Kovziridze, 2005).

The Cyprus problem deservedly earned the unflattering reputation among international mediators, who call it the “graveyard of diplomats and their initiatives” (Sommer, 2005). The harsh reality of the relationship between the elements of the Cyprus problem inner structural layer negated an ideal variant, the “golden” schedule of the UN and the EU coherence.

The created situation of parallel scheduling did not became the determining breakthrough factor in the Cyprus problem. Its parties were unable to reach an agreement to the other deadlines 28, 2003, March 11, 2003 and finally, during the resumption of the peace process in the February-April of 2004.

The thesis of the UN and the EU “synchronous step” on the basis of the peacekeeping initiative of the United Nations for Cyprus confirms the events of the first half of 2004. At that time, the EU format withdrew into the background: everything was ready for the RC integration into the EU. EU was waiting for the end of the discussions by the Cyprus antagonists of “Annan plan” text and the decision of the plebiscite on the political fate of the island. The UN acted as the main schedule “coder” of a final meeting once again which was “bound” to the end of the CR European integration process. At the end of the second phase of the negotiations on the harmonization of positions of the parties in Byrgenstoke (Switzerland) on February 13, 2004 the United Nations proposed a three-phase algorithm (Faustmann, 2004). The parties of the conflict were urged to complete the negotiations by 22 of March 2004. In case of this phase failure, it was supposed to involve Greece and Turkey by 29 of March to agree on the draft version of the UN project within a week of intense debates. Finally in case of the previous term failure, the revision of the text for the referendum was assigned for the United Nations in its entirety.

The parties of the conflict did not meet the UN schedule. The dynamics accumulated in 2003 disappeared. As a result, the UN experts modified independently the Annan's initiative. The results of the UN expert efforts as we already noted was the final version of the comprehensive settlement draft concerning the Cyprus problem, presented on April 23, 2004

#### **“ANNAN PLAN”: STRUCTURAL BORROWING OF EU CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE**

The feature of the “Annan Plan” final version content is the European Union constitutional experience borrowing. We are talking about the UN team use of the best practices concerning the basic law of one of the leading EU countries. In the text of the considered document a number of principles that appear in the constitutions of Belgium and Switzerland was found (Tocci and Kovziridze, 2005). In the draft of the Cyprus problem comprehensive settlement under the auspices of the UN, they regulate the state structure basis for a potential Cypriot state: the features of sovereignty distribution, the purview of the subjects constituting federal government, the specifics of their relationship in the framework of jointly shared powers.

The fact of UN experts appeal to the experience of Belgium one of six co-sponsoring countries of the European Union “ancestor” structure-during the development of a meaningful peace projects of Cyprus, thus allows to express an interesting idea that the impact of the EU revealed in the form of “Annan Plan” text. The UN experts referred to the experience of Belgium one of the founders of the pan-European integration association, used the European Union “force of attraction” in a passive form. The borrowing of the best constitutional practices of Belgium as the “recipe” for a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem overarching categories signifies the acceptance with the direction of the EU legal experience by Annan team.

To ensure the functioning of the federative Cypriot state the form providing the ultimate goal of the “Annan plan”, it is extremely important to find the right answer to the issue of sovereignty between the subjects of the federation. As is known, the problem of sovereignty “division” features interpretation and understanding in the framework of potential common Cyprus State is one of the most disputed category in the relationship between the conflict parties as evidenced by the unfortunate experience of previous initiatives under the auspices of the UN.

What algorithm to solve this important problem was offered by UN mediator? Cypriot participants were offered

the option of the distribution, the sovereignty “spreading” on both potential federal establishments the Greek Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot entities respectively. Similar to the Belgian constitutional norms, sovereignty would be carried out in a non-hierarchical way. At that it was proposed to transfer the majority of powers to perspective founder states to coordinate the policies in the field of their competence. It should be noted that the presented algorithm of sovereign rights implementation in general “works” at the EU level.

It should be noted, however, that the “Annan plan” and had a significant difference from the Belgian federal institutions. Thus, the subjects of the Federation were not allowed to enter into international agreements within the internal areas of their expertise (Tocci and Kovziridze, 2005). Thus, unlike Belgium, Greek and Turkish Cypriots as independent ethnic communities did not have the opportunity to confirm its right to national self-determination by this way through the Constitution.

As we see, the features of the European Union Member State constitutional arrangements were used in the comprehensive project of Cyprus casus settlement under UN auspices. First of all, the “Annan Plan” developed the idea of sovereignty implementation in a multiethnic state. Secondly, it should be noted that the experience of Belgium in the distribution of sovereignty between the ethnic groups inhabiting the country proved to be effective in practice. Finally, thirdly, the fact of Belgian experience borrowing in the project of a common Cyprus state development eloquently confirms the thesis on the use of constitutional experience by UN experts concerning one of the most important EU member states. Thus, we may talk about passive “soft power” influence of the Community as a structure on the United Nations activities as an international layer actor of the Cyprus problem.

#### **SUMMARY**

The interaction between the UN and the EU on the “field” of “Annan plan” is a non-trivial case. A new member joined the international layer of the Cyprus problem. However, he did not have a far-sighted strategy, a political weight and most importantly, a competent authority in the Cyprus situation. The tactics of the European Union which relied more on “soft power” than on Realpolitik, in our view, deprived the symbiosis EU-UN of more positive dynamics. The reasons for the weak role of the EU in 2002-2004 on Cyprus, according to the authors, consisted of fragmentation and weakness of its foreign policy, the absence of proper and adequate assessment of the Cyprus situation.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the abovementioned info we may conclude that the interaction of elements of the outer structural layer of the Cyprus problem is peculiar for the considered period. "Annan Plan" was the personification of the interdependence for such international actors as the EU and the UN. The specifics of the relationship between these elements of world politics generated a unique experience of the political cooperation between the EU and the UN which was based on the phenomenon of procedural and structural parallelism. Three meanings of parallelism are used for political interaction between the EU and the UN.

Firstly, the parallelism of the UN and the EU showed in the narrow, procedural sense. The practice of "deadlines" for achieving the progress by the Cypriot parties according to "Annan plan" is a tactical initiative of the UN which "tied" deadlines of its project to the process of Cyprus European integration. The content of this practice became an unspoken hierarchy in the system of relations between actors: the United Nations initiated a Cyprus settlement, the European Union acted as an additional actor.

Secondly, the interaction between the UN and the European Union at the time of "Annan plan" discussion by the Cypriot parties should be considered as the result of parallel projects. The United Nations were engaged in the projects of a comprehensive settlement on Cyprus, the European Union implemented an ambitious strategy of its borders expansion. The interests of the United Nations and the EU crossed in time on a single object which caused a precedent of joint peacekeeping of these organizations in Cyprus.

Finally, thirdly, the phenomenon of parallelism of the EU and the UN was manifested in the interpenetration of inner content of parallel processes. On the one hand, the developers of the "Annan Plan" borrowed the best legal practices of the EU during the preparation of the project text. On the other hand, the European Union developed

the legal aspect of the joining process to the Republic of Cyprus taking into account the negotiations on the "Annan Plan".

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

## REFERENCES

- Bredikhin, O.N., 2003. The Cyprus conflict in international relations [Text]. O.N. Bredikhin (Eds.), World Economy and International Relations. Moscow, 4: 54-62.
- Christou, G, 2002. The European Union in Cyprus: the power of attraction as a solution to the Cyprus issue. *J. Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 2: 1-26.
- Eralp, D.U. and N. Beriker, 2005. Assessing the conflict resolution potential of the EU: The Cyprus conflict and Accession Negotiations. *Security Dialogue*, 36 (2): 175-192.
- Faustmann, H., 2004. The Cyprus question still unsolved: security concerns and the failure of the Annan Plan. *Suedosteuropa-Mitteilungen*, 6: 44-68.
- Iseri, E.A., 2004. Comparative assessment of the United Nations and European Unions' roles in the resolution of Cyprus conflict: the scale of partiality-impartiality. *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, 9: 125-144.
- Sommer, J., 2005. Security in Cyprus: threat perceptions, possible compromises and the role of the EU. *Bonn International Center for Conversion*, 44: 105.
- Tocci, N. and T. Kovziridze, 2005. Europeanization and conflict resolution: Case studies of the European periphery. M.: Publisher "Ves mir", pp: 312.