



Address by President of the United Democrats,
Praxoula Antoniadou Kyriacou
At the 11th Congress of the New Cyprus Party, YKP

Dear Secretary General of the Executive Board of YKP,
Murat Kanatli,
Dear members of YKP,
Dear friends,

On behalf of the United Democrats, allow me to congratulate you for holding the 11th Congress of your Party and to wish you every success in its deliberations.

The Congress of YKP takes place at a very critical time for Cyprus. The current round of talks seems to be leading nowhere; Eight years after the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, the Cyprus Presidency of the EU finds Cyprus still divided, while leaders have so far failed to utilize the discovery of natural gas in Cyprus in a way that will promote peace rather than war.

In parallel, the economic crisis has stricken hard at the Cypriots and has emphasized the unhealthy economic links with the so called “motherlands”. On one hand, it has emphasized relations of dependency and hence lack of autonomy of the Turkish Cypriots versus Turkey, and on the other hand it has indicated that the financial investments made by Greek Cypriots in Greece were excessive and risky and to the detriment of the Cypriot economy.

The way ahead for the Cypriots does not lie in holding the hands of the motherlands but in holding the hands of each other. Such a development will transform the relationship with the motherlands from one of dependency to one of healthy cooperation between partners in peace.



We, the Cypriots, are running out of time, my friends. We missed a true opportunity in 2004 but despite our disappointment with leaders of the time, we decided to give peace another chance. But leaders failed to respond to the new opportunity given with the resumption of talks in 2008. Instead some leaders use the Cyprus problem as a way to perpetuate their hold on power.

We need leaders who can look into the future and see how the economy can revitalize, so that growth and jobs can be created. And we need jobs especially for the young. For a country that doesn't give opportunities to the young is a country without a future. And it is no wonder that increasing numbers of youth amongst both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities abandon their homeland and decide to live abroad for a better future.

We need leaders who understand that peace is more profitable than war; and that the reunification of Cyprus and the consequent normalization of relations between Cyprus and Turkey will be beneficial for both Cyprus and Turkey.

In this regard, the discovery of natural gas in Cyprus is an opportunity of make or brake. The resolution of the Cyprus problem in a way that will be reunifying the island will allow all the Cypriots to participate in the economic development and to share the benefits that the exploitation of our country's natural wealth will bring. At the same time it will allow the normalization of relations with Turkey, so that Cyprus and Turkey can become partners in peace to the benefit of both countries. For this is the time that Europe is looking for new sources of natural gas and the area of the Eastern Mediterranean is evolving as such a new source.

This is yet another opportunity that nature is giving to the Cypriots and we need responsible leaders to treat it as an opportunity for peace making , not as an opportunity for power building.



And we need to remember that Europe is watching. Europe, our wider family, has been accommodating all along. But local leaders have to remember that regional power politics are beyond us. Regional power politics will only favour the Cypriots if the Cypriots themselves decide that they want to favour their country –all of their country- and not their personal or Party grasp to power.

The United Democrats remain committed to the attainment of the reunification of our country on the basis of the bizonal bicomunal federation with political equality, and we are proud that our European Political family, the European Liberal Democrats, have unanimously endorsed this position in a resolution in November 2009.

In this regard -and to the extent that bigger political parties have failed to lead the country towards reunification- we will intensify our political activity both in Cyprus and Europe-wide, so that our country is eventually led towards a future that generations of Cypriots have been deprived but deserve, a future of peace, cooperation, economic development, acknowledgement for the youth and transition to a truly European country.

7th April 2012