

PRESS STATEMENT***NO RESTRICTIONS ON BI-COMMUNAL CONTACTS***

We declare our strong opposition to the decision of the Turkish-Cypriot authorities to stop bi-communal contacts, following the agreement to start negotiations for accession of Cyprus to the E.U. without the Turkish-Cypriots.

We believe strongly that the right of the people to meet without restrictions in their own country should be respected under any circumstances and should not be used as a point of dispute by either side. In this context we are also opposed to the closing of the Ledra Palace check-point by Greek-Cypriots in the past, or the harassment of supporters of rapprochement in their attempt to meet.

Irrespective of the progress or vicissitudes of the intercommunal talks, the ordinary people of Cyprus must continue to communicate and build bonds of friendship and cooperation, otherwise no settlement of the Cyprus problem can be viable and long-lasting.

We call upon the supporters of peace and rapprochement in Cyprus and internationally to put pressure on all sides to end the restrictions so that we can continue to work towards a peaceful future in a common homeland.

Signed by.....(list of all the organisations)

42 X 56.