

Armenian Community Quarterly Newsletter
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My fellow Armenians and friends

The elections of 22 May 2011 for the post of Armenian Representative in the House of Representatives of Cyprus are over and the emphatic election result is a strong and clear message sent out by our community in all directions. I am happy to note that the tensions and unpleasant atmosphere created artificially by some people prior to the elections have vanished, giving way to a calmer and more tolerant atmosphere. Normality has returned to our community and we can now resume our quest for a better tomorrow.

After the elections, with a letter dated 24 May 2011 which appears in full in this issue of Lradou, I conveyed my heartfelt thanks to all members of our community and promised to continue to work hard in pursuing the interests of our community.

With this issue, our quarterly newsletter Lradou, having completed its first five years of existence, embarks on its next five years, with the promise that it will continue to inform you regularly about community matters and the activities of the Representative and his Office.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Gabriella Petridou publicly for the services she has offered as my assistant in the House of Representatives over the last five years. Mrs Petridou leaves of her own free will and I wish her all the best for the future. Mrs Stalo Nicolaou-Yacoubian has already taken over the duties of Mrs Petridou.

Finally, I have the pleasure to inform you that the sailing boat **Armenia** which has been on a round the world trip, manned by a crew of seven and led by Zori Palayan, is putting to port at Limassol on Thursday, 11 August 2011, having concluded its mission successfully. To mark the occasion which coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia, a special welcoming ceremony will be held in Limassol port which will be attended by the presidents of Armenia and Cyprus, high ranking state and diplomatic officials and members of the Armenian community of Cyprus. A leaflet with further information has been circulated by the Representative's Office.

I sign off with best wishes for a peaceful, secure and invigorating summer holiday.

Vartkes Mahdessian

Representative of the Armenian community of Cyprus

QUARTERLY REPORT

Commemoration of the 96th anniversary of the Armenian genocide:

As in previous years the programme of events organised by the Cyprus Genocide Commemoration Committee commenced with the donation of blood, which took place on Wednesday, 20 April 2011, at the Nareg school in Nicosia. On Thursday, 21 April 2011, the documentary "The Survivors" was broadcast by CYBC TV2. A memorial service for the victims of the genocide was held on the morning of Monday, 25 April 2011, at the Sourp Boghos chapel in the old cemetery followed by the protest march along Armenias street in the evening. Members of the community then congregated in front of the genocide memorial where they were addressed by Archbishop Varoujan and Representative Vartkes Mahdessian. In his address Mr Mahdessian appealed for unity to overcome obstacles that are created to divide and weaken the Armenian people. The church choir enhanced the solemn atmosphere by performing a number of appropriate hymns and songs before wreaths and flowers were placed on the genocide memorial.

A praiseworthy and impressive commemoration of the genocide also took place on Tuesday, 10 May 2011, at the Pera Chorio and Nissou secondary school with the initiative and guidance of its PE teacher Levon Kazandjian and the participation of teachers and students of the school. The commemoration enjoyed the patronage of House President Marios Garoyian who was also the main speaker at the event. Sona Gargaloyian, Hovig Demirdjian and members of the **Sipan** dance ensemble were guest performers at the commemoration which was attended by high ranking officials from the Ministry of Education, Representative Vartkes Mahdessian, members of the Armenian Schools Committee, Nareg Head Teacher Vera Tahmazian, other guests as well as the teachers and the 600 students of the school.

After the event, Representative Vartkes Mahdessian sent a letter congratulating Mr Levon Kazandjian and the others involved in the organisation of the event for their outstanding achievement.

Pilgrimage to St Magar monastery:

On Sunday, 8 May 2011, the traditional pilgrimage to St Magar monastery, organised jointly by the Representative's Office and the Armenian Prelature, took place for a fourth time with the participation of about 150 pilgrims. The pilgrimage was covered by the **Yergir Media** TV crew who were in Cyprus at the time, to prepare a programme about the Armenian community of Cyprus. As in previous years, an emotional religious ceremony took place in front of the destroyed altar of the desecrated church with the participation of the congregation led by Archbishop

Varoujan and Father Momig. A press release covering the pilgrimage was given out by the Representative's Office later in the day.

Screening of the documentary film "The Armenians in Cyprus"

The screening of the documentary film "The Armenians in Cyprus" took place in the evening of Thursday, 19 May 2011, at the K-Cineplex. The film is a brief narrative (in Greek) of the history of the Armenian community of Cyprus and throughout the 50 minutes of its screening, the 250 people present were carried on a moving trip down memory lane. An English version of the DVD is also being prepared and information about obtaining a copy will be given out soon.

News from Nareg Armenian Schools:

On Tuesday, 17 May 2011, the new multi-purpose indoor auditorium of the school in Nicosia was inaugurated by the Minister of Education Mr Andreas Demetriou. The Representative Mr Mahdessian presided over the ceremony and Archbishop Varoujan led prayers during the blessing ceremony. The ceremony was attended by official guests, staff, parents and members of the community.

The annual Field Day of the Nareg schools took place on Wednesday, 18 May 2011. Representative Vartkes Mahdessian presided over the event and presented the medals at the conclusion of the Field Day.

On Wednesday, 8 June 2011, Mrs Maggie Mahdessian attended the end of year Kindergarten festivity of the school in Nicosia.

On Wednesday, 15 June 2011, Representative Mr V Mahdessian presided over the graduation ceremony of the Nareg schools. Mr Mahdessian and Archbishop Varoujan presented to the graduates their graduation certificates and prizes.

On Wednesday, 22 June 2011, Mr and Mrs Mahdessian held a reception at their residence in honour of Armenian graduates from all schools in Cyprus. Archbishop Varoujan, Fathers Mashdots and Momig, the headmistress and teachers of the Nareg schools were also present at the reception.

Finally, for the second year running and with the Representative's initiative and financial assistance, the graduates of the Nareg elementary school, accompanied by two teachers, left on the 10th of July for a fortnight's educational trip to Armenia, within the framework of the "Ari Doon" programme.

Election of Armenian Representative:

On Sunday, 22 May 2011, elections were held for the post of Armenian Representative in the House of Representatives. Vartkes Mahdessian was re-elected to the post by securing 68% of the votes cast. An analytical table for the election results is given below.

Vartkes Mahdessian

Antranik Ashdjian

	Votes	Percentage	Votes	Percentage
Nicosia (2 centres)	717	67%	353	33%
Larnaca	220	69%	101	31%
Limassol	168	69%	74	31%
Total	1105	68%	528	32%

After the official announcement of the election results and with the arrival of Vartkes Mahdessian at the AYMA playground, an evening of celebrations, open to all community members, commenced and continued through to the early hours of the next morning with the singer from Lebanon adding a bright note to the occasion. Addressing the large crowd, Mr Mahdessian declared that “the election victory belongs to us all and proves that our community preserves its harmonious existence and will continue to thrive for the benefit of the coming generations”.

Representative Vartkes Mahdessian’s visit to His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia:

On the 11th of June 2011 and as re-elected Representative, Vartkes Mahdessian paid a courtesy visit to His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia, accompanied by Archbishop Varoujan Hergelian and Chairman of the Diocesan Council Sebouh Tavitian. Mr Mahdessian briefed His Holiness about matters related to the pre-election campaign and His Holiness congratulated Mr Mahdessian on his election, gave him his blessings and expressed the wish that issues concerning the Armenian community of Cyprus be addressed in a constructive manner and in a spirit of cooperation.

During his stay in Lebanon, Mr Mahdessian also visited the offices of the **Aztag** daily newspaper accompanied by Mrs Mahdessian and was interviewed about the most recent developments within the Armenian community of Cyprus.

Mr and Mrs Mahdessian also attended one of the performances given by the Hamazkayin **Knar** dance ensemble.

Official functions and meetings:

On Saturday, 7 May 2011, Mr Mahdessian attended the ceremony marking the completion of the renovation of the Armenian cemetery near the Ledra Palace and the construction of new pavements on Marcos Drakou avenue and around the cemetery. During the ceremony, Nicosia Mayor Eleni Mavrou addressed the people gathered in front of the cemetery and expressed her satisfaction for the works carried out.

On Tuesday, 21 June 2011, Mr Mahdessian had a meeting with the rector of the University of Cyprus, Mr Constantinos Christophides and discussed with him matters

related to the new academic year and in particular the Armenian language courses run by the University.

Community life:

On Thursday, 5 May 2011, Representative Vartkes Mahdessian, in response to Archbishop Varoujan's suggestion and accompanied by the Archbishop, attended the inauguration ceremony of the AGBU Armenian Cultural Centre in Larnaca. The inauguration was carried out by the President of the Republic, Mr Demetris Christofias.

On Friday, 6 May 2011, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian attended the annual gala performance of the Hamazkayin **Sipan** dance ensemble held at the Pallas hall in Nicosia, under the joint patronage of the Minister of Education and the Armenian Representative. Prior to the programme, the Chairman of Hamazkayin invited Mr Mahdessian onto the stage and presented to him a commemorative plaque as a token of gratitude for his continuous and invaluable assistance.

On Saturday, 7 May 2011, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian attended service at the Armenian Evangelical Church. The sermon of the day was delivered by Rev Mihran Jizmedjian.

On Sunday, 15 May 2011, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian attended the performance of the Hamazkayin **Sipan** dance ensemble held at the Municipal theatre in Larnaca.

On Friday, 27 May 2011, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian attended the celebration of May 28 at the PASIDI hall, organised by the ARF Cyprus and affiliated organisations.

On Wednesday, 1 June 2011, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian attended the end of year ceremony at the **New Hope** special school.

On Friday, 3 June 2011, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian attended a special ceremony held at the Utudjian hall, on the occasion of the publication of three books edited by Archbishop Varoujan. Yeghia Kayayan who had an important input in the preparation for publication of these books, delivered an address marking the occasion. The ceremony was under the patronage of Mrs Maggie Mahdessian.

On Saturday, 18 June 2011, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian received in their residence a delegation from the Cyprus Armenian Evangelical Church, headed by Mr Hrayr Jebedjian. The delegation congratulated Mr Mahdessian on his re-election and discussed with him matters related to their church.

On the same day, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian attended a ceremony marking Fathers day, organised by the Armenian Club of Larnaca. The keynote speaker at the ceremony was the Head Teacher of the Nareg Armenian Schools Mrs Vera Tahmazian.

On Thursday, 23 June 2011, Mr & Mrs Vartkes Mahdessian attended a lecture at the AYMA club organised by the Cyprus committee of **Hay Tad**. Guest speaker was Prof

Niyazi Kizilyurek of the University of Cyprus who gave an analytical portrayal of "Turkey after the elections".

Congratulations:

On the 19th of April 2011, Representative Vartkes Mahdessian sent congratulatory letters to Natasha Tavoukdjian on the occasion of her first theatrical production "Half Armenian in LA" and to Hamazkayin "Oshagan" chapter for their efforts in preserving and promoting Armenian culture.

Getting acquainted with the Laws of the Republic of Cyprus:

Aliens and Immigration Unit - Identity cards for non Cypriots

The Aliens and Immigration Unit notifies all concerned that henceforth it will not issue identity cards to citizens of third country nationals and to nationals of member countries of the EU who have set up legal residence in Cyprus.

As regards citizens of third countries, according to EU directives, all member countries of the EU will adopt new and uniform residence permits based on biometric data. By the end of this year, aliens should be able to apply for new residence permits. The Aliens and Immigration Unit will make relevant announcements informing the public about the application forms when these are ready. In the meantime aliens should continue using their ARC/Alien Book in conjunction with their Residence Permit.

As regards citizens of the EU, their legal residence can be secured through a registration permit (MEU1-yellow slip). For members of their family who are not citizens of the EU, a residence permit is required (MEU2A-yellow slip), or alternatively, a permanent residence permit (MEU3-yellow slip).

If and when required, and to replace the former Identity card, a letter can be acquired from the Aliens and Immigration Unit confirming an individual's status according to the category of his/her residence permit. This letter can be used in transactions that involve government departments, banks and other services.

It should be emphasized that as before, the new residence permit cannot be used as a travel document.

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Letter of thanks

With this letter, I wish to convey my heartfelt thanks to all members of the Armenian community in Cyprus who participated in the elections that took place on 22 May 2011 for the election of Representatives to the House of Representatives.

I also express my gratitude to all those who personally, by telephone or e-mail, congratulated me on my re-election as Representative of the Armenian community of Cyprus.

I reciprocate, by promising that I will continue to carry out the duties entrusted to me meticulously and with the same zeal, devoting all my capabilities to pursue the interests of our community.

I believe that this success belongs to all of us, consequently, we will continue to work together harmoniously towards the goal of bringing prosperity to our community.

Sincerely yours

Vartkes Mahdessian
Representative of the Armenian community of Cyprus