

Armenian Community Quarterly Newsletter
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My fellow Armenians and friends

Having returned from the summer holidays, many of you must have looked forward to this issue of the *Lradou* quarterly newsletter, with which we complete the fourth year of its publication.

In July, with the visit to Armenia of most of the 2010 graduates of the Nareg schools, one of my many long-term aims was achieved. We refer to this visit more extensively further on in this newsletter.

In September, the team preparing the documentary about the Armenians of Cyprus, visited Armenia and stopped on the way in Lebanon to research the history of our community at the museum and library of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias. The Cathedral of St Gregory the Illuminator and the chapel of St Stephen erected in memory of the victims of the Genocide are featured in the documentary and the Catholicos himself, Aram I, has recorded a special message for the documentary.

In Armenia, the documentary team visited historical and cultural centres with relevance to the Armenian Diaspora and the Community of Cyprus in particular. The documentary is expected to be completed in the earlier part of 2011.

On October 11, the Ombudsman of the Republic is organising a special seminar, to be held at the Cleopatra Hotel in Nicosia, with subject “The contribution, rights and protection of minorities in Cyprus”, with the participation of the Representatives of all the Religious Groups. The event is part of the European Union's “Diversity Against Discrimination” programme. The event will be followed by a special performance of the 'Sipan' dance group.

In October, the Chairman of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Hovik Aprahamian, will be in Cyprus on a three-day official visit, at the invitation of the President of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus, Marios Garoyian.

Finally, the Armenian community of Cyprus, will be participating in the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the

Republic of Cyprus with special performances by the renowned contemporary musician Ara Gevorgian and his band, and with the participation of the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra. The event will take place at the Strovolos Municipal Theatre, on November 20 and 21. The guest of honour will be President Demetris Christofias and First Lady Elsie Christofias.

I wish you all the best and invite you to join the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Republic with the hope that together we will come through the difficult times facing Cyprus and be able to look ahead to a bright future.

Vartkes Mahdessian

Armenian Representative in the Cyprus House of Representatives.

QUARTERLY REPORT: After a short break in August, the Representative's Office resumed its work. Issues related to the Aliens and Immigration Department (AID) are still moving at a slow pace, but we are informed that all the case files have been moved to the new AID offices. Temporary Residence Permits are issued within three to six months and we are hopeful that the process will be quicker in the future. In the case that someone has to travel abroad on urgent business then the AID may issue a one-month Re-entry Visa under special circumstances at a cost of €10.26 in stamp duties.

NAREG GRADUATES VISIT ARMENIA: Ten graduates of the Nareg schools and two of their teachers travelled to Armenia for two weeks from July 9 to 23. This was an initiative of the Armenian Representative and was a present to the graduates who visited many of the noteworthy and historical sites of Armenia and also had the opportunity to meet with young people of their own age as part of the “Ari Doun” (Welcome Home) programme of the Diaspora Ministry. Upon their return home, most of the members of the group expressed their satisfaction and thanked Mr Mahdessian for his initiative which had presented them with a unique opportunity to visit their homeland at such a young age. Other members of the group returned home early because they had difficulty adjusting to the different environment in Armenia. The accompanying teachers said the activities and tours programme, as well as the involvement of the Diaspora Ministry had contributed to the success of the visit.

“MEET THE REPRESENTATIVE” IN LONDON: The Armenian Youth Association of London took advantage of Vartkes Mahdessian's

visit to London in the summer and organised a casual banquet with the participation of Bishop Vahan Hovanesian and Rev. Fr. Shnork Baghdassarian, as well as past football players of the AYA team and many other members of the Armenian community of London.

OFFICIAL MEETINGS: On September 13, the Armenian Representative met with a delegation from the European Committee for Racial Integration (ECRI) who had last visited Cyprus in 2005. During their meeting, Mr Mahdessian conveyed the difficulties that he often faces, created mainly by the constitutional constraints placed on the Representatives of the three Religious Groups, as well as issues related to the Armenian youth of Cyprus, such as the language barrier as they do not fully command the native Greek language. He also raised the sad issue of the current state of the Magaravank monastery that continues to deteriorate year after year.

On September 16, Mr Mahdessian received the Ambassador of Belgium, Mr Guy Severin, and on September 27, the Ambassador of France, Mr Jean-Marc Rives. The latest developments in the Cyprus issue and the current state of the Armenian community were discussed at both meetings.

On September 24, the Representatives of the three Religious Groups had a special meeting with the President of the House of Representatives, Mr Marios Garoyian, with whom they discussed ways to amend and improve articles of the Constitution related to the rights of the three Representatives and their communities.

On September 30, Mr Mahdessian had an extensive meeting with the Ambassador of Armenia in Greece and Cyprus, Mr Gagik Ghalachyan, who was in Cyprus on a two-day visit to join the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic.

OTHER EVENTS: The Armenian Representative and Mrs Mahdessian attended several community events:

- September 11, the Centenary Celebration Concert of the Armenian Relief Society, held at the Presidential Palace, under the auspices of First Lady Elsie Christofias. Haroutune Bedelian(violin) and Lorna Griffitt(piano) were the guest performers at the concert
- September 26, the Holy Mass at the Sourp Kevork church in Limassol commemorating St George's Day.

NOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS: On September 21, Mr Mahdessian sent a letter of congratulations to the Ambassador of Armenia in Greece and Cyprus, Mr Gagik Ghalachyan, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Armenia. In his letter Mr Mahdessian reiterated

that Armenia and the Diaspora will support each other to help overcome political and economic difficulties and jointly forge a bright future.

CONDOLENCES: On July 7, the Armenian Representative sent a letter of condolence on behalf of the Armenian Community of Cyprus to Catholicos Aram I on the sad occasion of the passing away of his father.

The Laws of the Republic of Cyprus

Residence Permit of a Mother or Father-in-Law of a Cypriot

In the regular publication of laws of the Republic, the latest edition of the 'Lradou' focused on the regulations and procedures issued by the Aliens and Immigration Department relating to the renewal of the Residence Permit of a Mother or Father-in-Law of a Cypriot.

There is special mention of all the required documents and procedures, starting from the M61 application form to the final payment of €34.17, as well as requirements for non-EU citizens.

Government grant for dependent children

Parents of young men serving in the National Guard may still apply for the Government Grant for Dependent Children (Επίδομα Τέκνου) by informing the Ministry of Finance and the Citizen's Bureaus in all towns. The same grant may be extended to the age of 25 after completing their national service, even if they are studying in Cyprus or abroad.