

THESES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF AKEL  
FOR THE 21st PANCYPRIAN CONGRESS  
25-28th November 2010, Nicosia, Cyprus

**AKEL: FORCE FOR CYPRUS, FORCE FOR THE PEOPLE**

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## **1. FROM THE 20th TO THE 21st CONGRESS**

### **The significance of the 21st Pancyprian Congress of AKEL**

The 21st Pancyprian Congress of AKEL will be held on 25-28th of November 2010. The Congress will assess the previous five-year period whose central reference point and most significant development was the election of Demetris Christofias to the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus. The Congress will set out the general guidelines of our policies, goals and struggles in the five-year period ahead. Given the Christofias administration and crucial phase of the Cyprus problem, the 21st Congress of AKEL assumes a special importance for our Party. Due to the very significant role AKEL plays in the political affairs of the country, the 21st Congress takes on a broader significance for Cyprus and our people, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The decisions of the 21st Congress are anticipated with great interest by the entire political spectrum and Cypriot society. Its decisions are awaited with interest also by all from abroad not only involved in one way or another with the Cyprus problem.

Cyprus is not isolated from the rest of the world. In a world where the Left and the forces of labour are under a full-frontal attack by the forces of conservatism and capital, Cyprus today has a President coming from AKEL and the Party of the working people is a ruling party. This fact attaches an international and European dimension to the 21st Congress of AKEL, in the sense that the progressive Left forces in Europe and the world are following developments in Cyprus with interest and welcome every success of the Cypriot Left as their own victory too.

### **New existing circumstances**

The 21st Congress will take place in very different existing circumstances and conditions than the previous Congresses, both for the Party but also for Cyprus in general as well. The given circumstances and conditions in which the Congress is taking place determine its significance too. The given conditions are: a) the election of Demetris Christofias to the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus, b) the role of AKEL as a ruling party, c) the ongoing decisive effort to solve the Cyprus problem, d) the enhanced international prestige of Cyprus, e) the very significant work carried out by the government, f) the world economic crisis, its impact on Cyprus and the struggle to tackle them, g) the situation on the internal front, and h) the intense efforts by Turkey to upgrade its role in our region and internationally.

### **The election of Demetris Christofias**

On the 24th February 2008, Demetris Christofias was elected President of the Republic of Cyprus with 53.36% of the vote. As AKEL, we expressed our great appreciation towards the Cypriot people who gave a clear mandate to Demetris Christofias, as well as to the political forces who backed his candidacy and worked for his election. The election of Demetris Christofias to the Presidency of the Republic represented a success of historical significance, not only for the Left, but also for the whole Cypriot people; a success that overcame decades-old prejudices and paved the way for new and hopeful perspectives, both in relation to the struggle for a just solution of the Cyprus problem, but also concerning the development of a more just society. The two years that have elapsed since the Christofias election victory have vindicated the assessments that this development

is a historically significant event and the aspirations of the people are daily being vindicated.

### **AKEL as a ruling party**

With the election of Demetris Christofias, AKEL assumed the role of a ruling party. Until 2008, the Cypriot people knew and acknowledged AKEL as a force of struggle and assertion for the rights of Cyprus and working people's rights. The Cypriot people acknowledged AKEL as a force for progress and responsibility, whether it was supporting governments or in opposition. Since 2008, the Cypriot people also know and appreciate AKEL as a force playing a leading role in the exercise of power. During this period, AKEL has shown in practise that it exercises power based on principles, in a different way, form and ethos to the benefit of the people and the cause of Cyprus. It is promoting social justice, progress and meritocracy. It remains consistent to long-standing positions. It continues to engage and communicate with the other forces with respect.

### **Determined effort for the solution of the Cyprus problem**

The policy and initiatives undertaken by President Christofias have led to the most determined attempt to solve the Cyprus problem. It was safeguarded from the beginning that this effort to solve the Cyprus problem would be of Cypriot ownership, without this meaning of course that Turkey is relieved of its own enormous responsibilities for the creation and perpetuation of the Cyprus problem, and the obligation to accept a solution based on principles. Suffocating timetables and arbitrations were excluded. The framework of the solution was explicitly defined as a bizonal bicomunal federal solution with political equality as set out in the resolutions of the United Nations; a solution of a united state with a single sovereignty, a single international personality and a single citizenship, a solution through which the Republic of Cyprus would evolve into a Federal United Republic. In the Working Groups and Technical Committees, and particularly in the direct talks between the two leaders of the two communities, such a serious and detailed discussion took place for the first time on the various aspects of the Cyprus problem. On certain issues mainly regarding the internal aspects important convergences were recorded governance concerning the economy and relations with the European Union, , although in general the progress that has been achieved could have been greater. Despite the assumption of the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community by Mr. Eroglou, the window of opportunity for an agreed solution remains open. All the possibilities to find an agreed solution must be exhausted because a just, workable and viable under the circumstances solution of the Cyprus problem means security, stability, prosperity and a guaranteed future for the Cypriot people as a whole.

### **Enhanced role of Cyprus**

President Christofias has convinced the international and European factor of his political will to work hard for a solution of the Cyprus problem based on the resolutions of the UN, the High-Level Agreements and international and European Law. President Christofias has convinced that his is ready for a sincere and honourable compromise that will respect the political equality, safeguard the interests of both communities and the Cypriot people as a whole. President Christofias has convinced through his policy, proposals and devotion to principles, but also with his flexibility. All of these actions have taken the Greek Cypriot side out from the difficult position it had found itself in after 2004 and enhanced

tremendously the prestige and respect of the Greek Cypriot side both in the international and European arena. This upgraded prestige and respect that foreign forces express towards Cyprus constitutes a very powerful weapon in our struggle for the successful outcome of the efforts to solve the Cyprus problem.

### **Significant work**

In the over two years since exercising power, President Christofias and his government enjoying the unwavering support of AKEL, has promoted the implementation of the programme of governance at a quick pace. Despite the difficulties and hardships, a very significant work has already been produced. The Christofias government has tackled long-standing problems that other governments did not dare tackle. It has solved many of these problems, whilst the solution of others is underway. The Christofias government has promoted radical reforms in fields such as education, local self-government, social insurance, public transport system, the energy, water, housing problem and the combating of poverty. It is implementing the slogan for a more just society by rendering practical support to the weaker groups of the population.

### **Favourable environment for social struggles**

President Christofias, coming from the ranks of AKEL, is embodied by a specific social philosophy. His social sensitivity is very well known. His government has the common people at the centre of its attention. It fully respects the gains of the working people and the people in general. It is promoting the various issues through social dialogue. All these developments have created a favourable climate through which the social, trade union and popular struggles for further progress, prosperity and growth are advanced further.

### **The struggle against the crisis**

The world economic crisis unavoidably has affected Cyprus too. This is an unfavourable coincidence, which is complicating the work of the Christofias government. The government, in constant dialogue with the political forces and social sections, is continuously taking measures for the rejuvenation of the economy and the tackling of the negative impacts of the crisis. Despite the difficulties and reduced possibilities of the state due to the crisis, the government is continuing its social and developmental work. It is guided by the philosophy that seeks the biggest burden of the crisis is shouldered by those who have the economic capacity to do so and not by ordinary working people. It is being proved in practise how important it is for a pro-peoples Left government, and not a neo-liberal conservative government, to be in power in the difficult times the economy is going through.

### **Internal front**

Despite the evident successes of the Christofias government and significant steps that are being taken to the benefit of the people, but also the intense efforts underway for the solution of the Cyprus problem, the situation on the internal front regrettably is not good. The levelling criticism, the nihilistic approaches, the unjust attacks, nagging, demagoguery and populism, the extremist stand that often goes beyond the limits of political culture we have established in Cyprus, are a daily phenomenon. This situation provokes unnecessary confrontations on the

internal front, undermines unity, weakens the negotiating position of President Christofias and sets obstacles to the implementation of the programme of governance to the benefit of the people. In addition, the trust of the international factor with regards the readiness of the Greek Cypriot community for a solution is undermined. The well-known circles close to Turkey, who are constantly trying to cover-up its intransigence, are exploiting the situation on our internal front to Turkey's benefit.

### **Upgraded role of Turkey**

The dissolution of the Soviet Union, in contrast to the assessments made by various circles in Cyprus, did not lead to the weakening of Turkey internationally, but to its upgrading in general. As a result of the change in the balance of forces on an international scale in recent years, Turkey has an upgraded role within NATO, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, where it holds the post of General Secretary, as well as in various regional associations of the Caucasus region and Central Asia. Furthermore, it holds the Presidency during the current term of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations for the period 2008-2010 also took on a particular significance in the international upgrading of Turkey's role.

## **2. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS**

Our Congress is taking place in a period during which the capitalist system and its neo-liberal model of management are going through a deep crisis as a result of the inherent contradictions of the system and acute intensification of inequalities over the last three decades since neo-liberalism had been imposed.

In the years that have elapsed since our previous Congress, the imperialist new world order has continued and strengthened, with the USA and their allies seeking to maintain and extend their world hegemony at all levels - economic, political and military-strategic.

In their efforts to secure the tolerance and consent of the peoples, the imperialist forces have replaced the pretext of the communist danger with terrorism, whereby in the name of combating it they are attempting to "legalise" their criminal actions and policies. In addition, under the pretext of alleged "democratisation" they are seeking the subversion and/or overthrow of non-friendly governments and regimes not to the liking of the USA.

At the same time, inter-imperialist rivalries are developing at all levels, regarding groups of states, separate states and international monopolies. Naturally, rivalries are even developing between allied states or groups of states within alliances, with the European Union as a characteristic example.

The imposition of the imperialist new order is developing in a blatant way against the interests of the peoples, working people and the common people.

This is taking place through the setting aside of International Law and imposition of the right of the mighty through double standard policies and practices.

It is expressed through the attempt for the guardianship and substitution of the UN, through the adoption and promotion of dogmas by NATO such as that of the

"pre-emptive attack" dogma and numerous so-called "peacekeeping" and "humanitarian" missions.

It is promoted through the growing militarisation of international relations, the intensification of the arms race, the continuous attempt to extend spheres of influence and the expansion of the network of USA and NATO military bases.

The accession of Cyprus to NATO, or in its client institutions such as the "Partnership for Peace", is not in the interests of the Cypriot people and the goals our people have set out. This is precisely the reason why no Cypriot government in the past has submitted such an application to join, which, inter alia, clashes with the much-troubled history of our country. The existence of NATO in our times constitutes a political anachronism.

is being constructed through imperialist interventions and the occupation of countries, through the instigation of racism, religious and cultural bigotry and the curtailment of human rights and civil liberties through laws on terrorism. It is using new means and methods, much more refined and democratic only in name, such as through various "velvet" or "colour revolutions".

The new world order is being promoted through the shameful attempt to camouflage the deadlocks of capitalism, through the cultivation of anti-communist hysteria with the attempt to distort/revise history and equate fascism with that most noble and humanitarian ideology the human mind has given birth to - communist ideology. The "new world order" exploits mistakes, shortcomings and distortions or/and abuses in practise of the vision of socialism in order to promote imperialist ideology.

In the sphere of the new world order, capitalism in its highest stage, imperialism, manages to survive through the ever-increasing exploitation of man-by-man. It manages to survive through the blood and tears shed by tens of millions of children, through the growing economic and social inequalities. The super-exploitation of countries and peoples by the multinational companies, who control the political affairs of the major capitalist states, results in poverty, destitution, abjection, hardships, the suffering and exclusion of hundreds of millions of people all over the world, in both developing but also developed countries.

They are many examples of the abhorrent realities of the new world order during the period that has elapsed since our previous Congress.

The occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan by the USA and its NATO allies is continuing.

The occupational crimes against the heroic Palestinian people by the state of Israel are continuing.

The attacks against the sovereignty of independent states and the violation of International Law, as in the case of the self-declaration of the independence of the Serbian region of Kosovo and its recognition by several states, are continuing.

The USA is continuing to intervene in an overt way in Latin America through the deployment of the Fourth Fleet of the USA in the continent, the presence of military bases in Guantanamo and Colombia, the continuation of the criminal

embargo against the people of Cuba, as well as through the implicit backing of the putschist government of Honduras.

The adoption of the new strategic dogma of NATO is being promoted through the incorporation in writing of what has already been imposed on the ground, such as the geographical expansion of its interventions, the extension of the nature of its missions to cover issues such as energy and the environment, its reaffirmation as a nuclear military bloc, in contradiction with its declarations for nuclear disarmament, as well as through the demand for increased military budgets on its member states.

In Europe, the deployment in Bulgaria and Rumania of the new anti-missile shield by the USA and NATO is continuing, whilst NATO forces are still deployed in the Balkans.

In the European Union, with the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, its dependence on NATO and the USA has been institutionalised in the field of foreign policy and security and defence policy, whilst at the same time it is committed to raising arms expenditure and in general to its complicity in the militarisation of International Relations.

In Africa, the militarisation of the continent is continuing and the interventions in Somalia, the Peoples Republic of the Congo, in the region of the Horn of Africa and Sudan, as well as through the presence of AFRICOM, the Military Command of the USA in Africa. The so-called new world order on the one hand consolidates its positions internationally, however at the same time other developments too on the international arena must not be ignored that have their own increased significance. The "new world order" faces resistance in various parts of the world. The struggles of the peoples do not allow the advocates of the "new order" to carry out their plans in the way they would desire. In Latin America, developments of a radical character are taking place. China is emerging as a big economic and consequently political force that is upgrading its own presence in international developments. Russia is constantly becoming more powerful, strongly asserting the role of a superpower.

The assessments of AKEL about the character of the European Union as an advanced form of capitalist political and economic integration remain unchanged. Developments are constantly vindicating our assessments.

Six years have passed since the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union. It is increasingly becoming evident that the decisions approved in Brussels, as well as the situation that exists within the EU, are affecting the lives of the Cypriot people.

AKEL is studying all the important issues, utilising the experience it has accumulated, participating actively, projecting creatively its positions and struggling on both a local and on the broader European and European Parliament level, having the working people, the interests of the Cypriot people as a whole and solidarity with other peoples at the centre of its interest.

Concerning our presence in European institutions, our Party focuses on the efforts to protect and expand democratic, social and labour gains and on the determined effort to curb anti-popular, neo-liberal and conservative policies. This is a demand that meets the needs not only of the Cypriot people, but also of the majority of

the peoples of Europe. We reaffirm our devotion to the goal for another Europe; a Europe of peace, democracy and social justice; the Europe of the peoples for which we shall continue fighting for, together with other forces of the Left in the European arena.

The government headed by President Christofias in very difficult conditions for small states, is undertaking strong efforts for the equal participation of our country in European institutions. At the same time, it is fighting by projecting progressive positions, positions in line with International Law. We welcome the declared position of the President of the Republic for a struggle "for the promotion of policies to tackle effectively the existing inequalities and encourage sustainable development through the simultaneous protection of the environment".

The current situation in the European arena unfortunately reaffirms our assessment that the EU today is very far from being turned into an arena where the rights of the peoples prevail instead of the interests of the monopolies, capital and powerful member-states.

As Cyprus, we can reap positives in fields such as the environment, technological and network modernisation, in the fields of health and others. However, the general developments within the EU are not hopeful.

The Lisbon Treaty has been in force since the 1st of December 2009, despite the "NO" of the peoples as expressed in a number of referenda, a fact that constitutes a new reality. Our Party after a comprehensive study voted against the first, as well as the final form of the Treaty, which promotes a framework even more conservative as analysed by the 20th Congress too. Inter alia, it contains provisions that are against working people and the welfare state, curbing political rights and civil liberties, further connecting the foreign and security and defence policy of the EU to NATO, leading to the further militarisation of international relations to the detriment of International Law. We assess that the abolition of the right of veto on a number of issues constitutes a negative development, especially for small member-states.

In recent years, the ruling circles have resolutely promoted a series of decisions characterised by the pressure for the deregulation of labour relations and services, the further liberalisation of the financial sector. All of these developments were included in the Lisbon Strategy that ended in 2010. Not only has the EU not become the most competitive economy in the world as its goal had proclaimed, but the content of these policies has extended and exacerbated the consequences of the world capitalist crisis in Europe. Our Party promptly warned about the dangers arising from the implementation of a framework promoting unbridled competitiveness. However, regrettably the ruling circles continued the policy of deregulation.

AKEL within the framework of the discussions for a new European Strategy until 2020 elaborated proposals for a new Strategy on a European level, with different priorities and philosophy. The proposal of AKEL includes, inter alia, proposals for the reduction and eradication of poverty, the formulation of a strategy aiming at curbing unemployment through the creation of new quality (stable and permanent) jobs, the obligation to comply with regulated employment through the adherence of collective agreements and the right to working people's trade union organisation, the creation of public housing schemes, the increase in public expenditure for investments in Renewable Energy Resources. The rupture with the

conservative policies of the Stability Pact and the respect of the peculiarities of each state constitutes a basic component for the success of such social goals.

It is worrying that instead of agreeing on a European level to a change of course and in the content of policies, it appears that we will witness a further hardening of the Stability Pact and its criteria, indeed through the involvement of the International Monetary Fund and the loathsome conditions that accompany it. AKEL does not agree with these policies and projects a different vision.

The trend in restricting the civil liberties and individual rights of citizens, organised groups and movements, in the name of combating terrorism is a policy of deadlock and undermines people's gains. The only effective way to combat terrorist and violent actions against innocent civilians is through the establishment of a comprehensive policy based on International Law that responds to the social causes of these phenomena.

In the 2009 European elections as AKEL-Left-New Forces, we achieved a great success. We gained the extremely high percentage of 34.90%. We increased our strength by 7% in comparison to the previous European elections. In the European Parliament, the Party and its MEP's are waging battles with emphasis on the promotion of the Cyprus problem and policies in the people's interests. The presence of our Party within the European Parliament was decisive, especially on issues concerning the Cyprus problem, the promotion of the interests of the Cypriot people and the protection of rights. Together with the other progressive and Left parties and working people's trade unions, AKEL is participating in broader struggles in the European arena, indeed also undertaking concrete initiatives.

Since 2004, AKEL has been participating through its MEP's in the Confederal Group of the European United Left-Nordic Green Left. The contribution of our Political Group, despite its small size, is significant for the working people of Europe and is invaluable for the Cypriot people. It constitutes the progressive voice within the European Parliament which through its positions and actions, as well as through its alliances at times with other MEP's and groups based on principles, is contributing to the curbing of schemings against the people's interests and to the creation of better conditions. Regarding the Cyprus problem, it represents our most consistent ally within the European Parliament.

AKEL will continue to support our Political Group, as well as upholding its confederal character. We shall continue to work so that our Group will gain a greater influence and prestige.

### **The situation in Turkey and its enhanced role**

Over the last decade, Turkey has passed through a new stage of capitalist development, a fact that has decisively contributed to big political, economic and social changes in the country. This process is underway within the framework of the intensification of contradictions and confrontations, both between the ruling class and the working people, as well as between the various sections of Turkish big capital. The leading political force in this whole process is the Justice and Development Party of Prime Minister Erdogan, who for the first time won government power in the early general elections of November 2002. So far, the Justice and Development Party still maintains its leading position in the political affairs of Turkey.

The domestic situation in Turkey today continues to be characterised by the fierce clashes between the government and the so-called Kemalist establishment. The specific confrontation does not only assume the character of a battle between political Islam and secular-Kemalist forces, a view that is promoted both within and outside of Turkey. The content of the current clash is above all inter-class, given that this is being waged between a section of the ruling class that is supporting the government and the section that is identified with a section of the so-called Kemalist bureaucracy and the armed forces. The so-called "Islamist" bourgeois class backing the ruling party and which appeared since the 1980's, today is evidently stronger, a fact which leads to confrontations with the section of Turkish capital, that has been strengthened by its cooperation with the Kemalist bureaucracy. The current clash in Turkey also assumes the character of a struggle for power, since the rise of the Justice and Development Party has challenged the traditional power of the Kemalist establishment, that is to say, the armed forces, the judicial power and a section of the so-called secular bourgeois class.

The current clash in Turkey does not have the characteristic of a clash between democracy and autocracy. The Justice and Development Party is a party founded by the so-called "Islamic" ruling class, aiming at expanding capitalist growth and development and breaking the monopoly of the accumulated profit that was amassed by the traditional business circles of the country. Consequently, the fundamental characteristics underlining the current situation in Turkey will not be overcome soon. Right now, the Turkish government is in a stronger position than its opponents, without this meaning it has finally won the battle against the so-called Kemalist establishment. It is a fact that during the whole period of the administration of the Justice and Development Party, and particularly during the early years, many reforms and changes have been made, that have contributed to some democratisation measures of Turkey. However, it is also a fact that a great deal still needs to be done towards this end, so that Turkey can become a genuine democratic country, especially concerning labour, ethnic and minority rights.

The changes being observed in Turkey today are not the result just of the change in domestic balances. They are at the same time due to the change in the international situation as this has begun to be formed after the end of the Cold War.

Turkish foreign policy today is seeking to ensure a leading role in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans. With the backing of the USA and NATO, Turkey is aiming at becoming a "model state" for the Muslim world, focusing on the secular character of the state and the unhindered functioning of the so-called free market. Towards this end, it has promoted the dogma of "zero problems" with its neighbouring countries. This specific dogma does not represent its ultimate goal, but its means to increase its influence throughout the entire region of Eurasia. The objective of enhancing the influence of Turkey is achieved mainly through bilateral mechanisms of cooperation with states of the region, the sharp increase of trade relations and the attempt to integrate these regions in the developed capitalist economies through Turkey.

At the same time, a basic component of Turkish foreign policy remains the accession to the European Union. It is a fact that the upgrading of Turkey in the regions of the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans at this moment in time is also connected to the traditional ties of the country with the USA, NATO and the EU. However, in recent years, and particularly after 2005 when Turkey began its negotiations for accession, a great deadlock is being observed in its accession

procedure to the EU. This fact, in conjunction with the bad economic situation of the EU and the relatively stable economic situation of Turkey, the upgrading of Turkey globally, but also with the many difficulties Turkey is facing, and which it cannot currently overcome, are factors that reduce the country's interest for accession. This situation is leading Turkey more to the assertion of maintaining the perspective for accession to the EU, rather than accession as such.

Within the previously mentioned framework, the Cyprus problem is being affected in a substantial way. Turkey is not at this moment showing that the solution of the Cyprus problem is high on its priorities, despite public statements issued by government officials to the contrary. It is not showing that it is ready to make such concessions that will satisfy the reasonable concerns of the Greek Cypriot community so that the road can be paved for the reunification of our country. The fact that important EU member states are opposed to the prospect of Turkey's full accession to the EU, but also to the general framework of the international position of Turkey, are factors that affect in a negative way the Cyprus problem as follows:

- Turkey is continuing to look forward to accession to the EU without its aspirations regarding this goal being as prominent as before.
- It is seeking to stabilise itself as a regional power and increase its influence in the region in a way that will create a "Turkish" new order.
- Within this framework, the Cyprus problem is one the one hand continuing to be tied to its EU accession course, however at the same time it is also viewed as an issue concerning Turkey's interests in the region. Consequently, as far as Turkish policy is concerned, the solution of the Cyprus problem or the reversal of the status quo on the island does not necessarily mean the reunification of Cyprus too.
- The general upgrading of the role of Turkey in the region helps it set more pressingly its own terms on the Cyprus problem. Furthermore, it facilitates Turkey in concluding alliances and in demanding rewards in the direction of the upgrading of the occupational regime.

### **The world economic crisis**

In capitalism, the safeguarding of bigger profits is the sole motive for increasing production. Capital is not interested in satisfying society's needs. In its effort to ensure increased profitability, it is expanding its activities, introducing modern technology, intensifying the exploitation of working people and injecting an ever-increasing bulk of goods and services into the market. The lust of capital to increase its profitability in the contemporary age and its unique inventiveness has led to the creation of financial sub-goods or **class products** because of the need to "use" the accumulated capital that have been mustered during the period of economic euphoria.

Economic crises are not accidental phenomena in capitalism. On the contrary, they are inherent in the capitalist production system and surface now and then throughout all its existence. The causes of the economic crises are to be found in the very character of capitalist production itself.

In capitalism, production has a social character, that is to say, all working people take part in the production of material goods and services. However, the result of this unified productive work is not enjoyed by all, but only by a small group of the

population, the owners of capital. This fundamental contradiction of capitalism (the contradiction between the social character of production and the ownership of the product of the labour of millions of people by a small group of capitalists) is the main cause of the economic crises.

The economic crises constitute precisely the open expression of the internal contradictions of capitalism. When an economic crisis breaks out, capital uses various means to overcome it and return to "normality". Above all, it is trying to put all the burden of the crisis on the backs of the working people. It is achieving this to a great extent, especially in the countries where the working class is not well organised.

During this period, capital is exacerbating the exploitation of working people to the greatest degree through the reduction of wages, the increase in working hours etc. That is to say, an all out attack is being waged against workers gains, a policy we are witnessing that is being implemented in the overwhelming majority of the countries plagued by the crisis.

The increasing tensions in the financial sector, which began in the middle of 2007, initially through the high risk mortgaged loans (mainly in the USA) in the end led to the current crisis that the whole of the capitalist system is now undergoing. This is a deep structural crisis of capitalism, of the kind that is repeated now with greater frequency, intensity and depth.

It is a crisis which proves the bankruptcy of neo-liberalism, of the capitalist model of development that has built its structures through the attack on the welfare state, the complete deregulation of labour relations, the selling off of the wealth of countries and of course through the worshiping of the capitalist market which, according to its advocates, had until recently the capability of regulating everything.

They ignored, and unfortunately are still ignoring the fact that the market itself regulates the fundamental basis of its goal, which is none other than the maximisation of profit. A fundamental social consequence was the creation on the one hand of a huge reservoir of poor, unemployed, and on the other hand, enormous wealth concentrated in the hands of a few. We as AKEL are fighting for the establishment of regulations that will curb the anarchy of the market.

Regretfully, the ideology and practises of neo-liberalism were gradually imposed by the USA on the EU in other parts of the world too. It was transformed into the ruling ideology of the Right, but also of the social democratic parties.

The collapse of the financial sector was the beginning of an overall economic crisis capitalism is facing. The desperate attempt by the USA and many countries of the EU to salvage the financial sector by injecting huge sums from state funds appears to be succeeding only temporarily.

The reversal and stemming of the crisis will occur only when states decide to invest in the real economy, when they decide to support the small and medium size businesses, promote much more development projects, and create new jobs for working people.

The overcoming of the world economic crisis demands that above all conclusions be drawn regarding the root causes leading to this crisis.

The first conclusion to be drawn is that the socio-economic model that was implemented, that is to say neo-liberalism, could not ensure stability, prosperity and progress for contemporary societies. Unfortunately, this revelation was made in the worst possible way for the peoples. The world financial crisis that erupted all over the world reaffirmed that the future of humanity cannot be capitalism, but that the future is socialism with a democratic and human-centred character.

It is a fact that capitalism succeeded in giving an impetus to the development of the productive forces of humanity. It succeeded in adapting itself to technological and other developments. However, it has failed in creating the preconditions for social justice and prosperity for all.

### 3. THE CYPRUS PROBLEM

The Cyprus problem is an international problem: a problem of invasion, occupation, the presence of settlers, foreign interventions and flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, as well as of the human rights and basic freedoms of the Cypriot people as a whole. More than thirty-six years after its invasion in Cyprus, Turkey is continuing its flagrant violation of the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. Violating fundamental principles of International Law, the Constitutional Charter of the United Nations, a whole number of resolutions and decisions, principles and values the European Union is founded, Turkey persists in its intransigent stand.

At the same time, the Cyprus problem also concerns the reformation of the structure of the Cypriot state, as well as the normalisation of the relations between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot community. It is not correct that the internal aspect of the Cyprus problem displaces the issue of the invasion and occupation, but neither should this aspect itself be underestimated. It has its own great significance.

In the years following 1974, a series of initiatives were undertaken, aiming at the solution of the Cyprus problem. Unfortunately, all the efforts came up against the refusal of Ankara for a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem based on the principles of International Law. Turkey in reality has never ceased projecting the demand for a solution of two separate state entities and asserting rights of sovereignty over Cyprus.

The devotion of AKEL and the President of the Republic towards finding a just under the circumstances, workable and viable solution that will terminate the occupation and reverse partitionist *faits accomplis*, ensure the reunification of our country and people, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, as well as the right of all the refugees to return, is given. Also given is our insistence on finding a solution within the agreed framework of a bizonal bicomunal federation with political equality, as set out by the relevant resolutions of the United Nations; a solution in line with International and European Law, based on the High-Level Agreements of 1977 and 1979 and providing for the evolution of the Republic of Cyprus from a unitary to a federal state, with a single sovereignty, a single citizenship and a single international personality.

Regretfully, within the framework of the so-called new world order and the gradual continuing deviation of international relations from the basis of International Law,

the Turkish positions continue to draw support due mainly to the web of geo-strategic, economic and other interests. The perpetuation of the problem is not all unrelated to the contemporary antagonisms in our wider region for geo-political and economic control, the safeguarding of the access to energy resources and the control of the natural gas pipelines.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the community of socialist states in Europe, as well as the decline of the Non-Aligned Movement, an even greater opportunity was given to the USA and its close allies in NATO to shape an international environment based on force and the "right of the mighty". This fact also affected the course of our own problem since within this specific international relation environment, Turkey is being promoted as an even more significant force in world affairs. This also largely explains the difficulties we are encountering today on the international arena and within the European Union, despite the fact that since 2004 and thereafter the Republic of Cyprus is a full member-state of the EU, which it joined with all its entire territory. All this, despite the general recognition of the creative role the Greek Cypriot side, and more specifically the President of the Republic, is playing.

After the rejection of the 2004 Annan Plan, the difficulties the Greek Cypriot side was called upon to tackle for a long time grew. Up to the Presidential elections of 2008, some of our partners in the European Union opted to blame us for the non-progress of the Cyprus problem, indeed with a disposition to punish due to the rejection of the proposed Plan for a solution.

The election of Demetris Christofias to the Presidency of the Republic gave a new impetus to the course of the Cyprus problem and rejuvenated, through the constant assumption of substantive initiatives, the procedure of the talks and the prospect for a solution. D. Christofias implemented and developed the 8th of July Agreement of 2006. Working Groups and Technical Committees, as the 8th of July Agreement provided for, were established, functioned and produced work. The common statements of the two leaders of the two communities - on the 23rd May and 1st July 2008 - formed the basis for the beginning of direct talks. For the first time, the Turkish Cypriot side explicitly accepted that the bizonal bicommunal federal Republic of Cyprus will have a single sovereignty, a single international personality and a single citizenship.

On the initiative and insistence of the President of the Republic, it was clarified and agreed from the beginning that the procedure of the talks would be of Cypriot ownership and that there would not be suffocating timetables and arbitration.

Aiming at the achievement of the solution, which represents the only real option for the future of our country and people, President Christofias with his negotiating team submitted a number of proposals, based on principles and the long-standing positions of the Greek Cypriot community at the talks. During the talks, convergences, particularly on the chapters on Governance, the Economy and the European Union, were recorded. Big divergences, mainly concerning the chapters on property, the territorial issue, security and guarantees, remain, as well as on the issue of the settlers. In view of these facts, AKEL assesses that progress was registered during the talks that should not be nullified; however, this progress is still not satisfactory.

More specifically, on the chapter regarding executive power, we assess that the proposals the President of the Republic submitted overcome the negative legacy of

the 1960 Zurich Agreement and of the Annan Plan. These proposals are correct, unifying, logical and democratic that can become mutually acceptable. They are proposals that are in line with the principles of the solution of the Cyprus problem and the unanimous decisions of the National Council of 1989 and serve the efforts to find a bizonal bicomunal federal solution, as the two communities have committed themselves to also towards the international community since 1977.

In assessing the latter, we express our unreserved support to the policy and handling of the President of the Republic with regards the Cyprus problem. The President is handling the Cyprus problem based on a coherent strategy, which serves the objective of attaining a solution that will liberate Cyprus from the occupation, colonisation and restore the human rights of our people.

The President is exhibiting political will for a solution of the Cyprus problem, devotion to principles, determination, realism and readiness for a mutually acceptable compromise with the Turkish Cypriot community. In the international arena, he is utilising to the greatest possible degree the international and European factor, following a multifaceted foreign policy. He is enhancing the base of support Cyprus has abroad, continuously utilising the status of Cyprus as a member of the EU, consolidating the relations of the Republic of Cyprus with traditional allies and friends. The credibility of President Christofias among the international and European arena constitutes a powerful weapon, where he is acknowledged everywhere as that leader who sincerely desires and works for a solution of the Cyprus problem within the framework also accepted by the international community.

Undoubtedly, the assumption of the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community by Mr. Eroglou represents a negative development. The positions he expresses through time go against the interests of the Cypriot people as a whole and are outside the agreed framework for a solution and waging of the talks. If Mr. Eroglou continues to come to the talks with these or similar positions, then the prospect of the talks looms ominously. Seen in this light, we assess that the demand of the President for Dervis Eroglou to comply with the agreed framework was correct and imperative.

President Christofias reacted very correctly with letters and other actions directed towards the Secretary-General of the UN, the permanent members of the Security Council and the European Union by promptly pointing out the dangers arising from the positions expressed by Mr. Eroglou and called on the international and European factor to assume their responsibilities. The United Nations, the permanent members of the Security Council and the European Union must exert their influence on the Turkish side, so that it will act within the agreed framework. At the same time when we, but also the international factor, are insisting that the Turkish side must act within this agreed framework, it would be a fatal mistake through our own wrongful actions - such as the withdrawal of proposals - to provide Turkey with the opportunity to dodge and escape from the agreed framework and for us to be held responsible for a possible stalemate.

The declarations of Prime Minister Erdogan that he wants a solution of the Cyprus problem by the end of the year must be translated into political will and in practise at the negotiating table, as the conclusions of the December 2009 European Council also stress. Otherwise, they will merely prove to be communication games that do not help at all. Ankara must understand that the perpetuation of the Cyprus problem is a problem for Turkey itself and its ambitions. The sooner it

understands this reality and changes its policy, the quicker will the road for the solution of the Cyprus problem open up. AKEL is following and analyzing carefully the developments underway in Turkey and with concern notes that evaluations of various circles that the Cyprus problem, despite the verbal declarations, is not among the priorities of the Turkish government at this moment. Moreover, the assessment that in the confrontation between Erdogan and the deep state the management of the Cyprus problem is being left to the armed forces and the opponents of the Turkish Prime Minister provokes concern and reflection.

The assumption by Dervis Eroglou of the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community must not lead to disillusion. On the contrary, it is imperative that contacts and coordination of actions are intensified with those forces of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots who genuinely want a solution of the Cyprus problem based on a bizonal bicomunal federation.

In relation to the Cyprus problem, even the possibility of arriving at a solution is provoking reactions that have been lingering for some time on the internal front. It is evident that a section of the political forces - with the backing of the mass media - is increasingly challenging and opposing the solution of a bizonal bicomunal federation. Instead of a bizonal bicomunal federation, a utopian idealist perfect solution is projected which no one has ever specified and even more so, has not said how and with what support from the international arena this kind of a solution will be achieved. In the name of this idealist solution, a culture promoting a non-solution and the acceptance of partition is in essence being cultivated. Those opposing federation, whether they realise it or not are promoting partition with all the disastrous consequences such a development would mean for our people as a whole.

In addition, it is also evident that weariness, but also oppositionist and pre-election expediencies, are leading certain circles to submit proposals which, if implemented, would trap the Greek Cypriot side into suffocating timetables and unacceptable arbitrations, resulting not in the finding of an agreed solution to the benefit of Cyprus and our people, but to the imposition of a solution serving foreign interests.

AKEL, uncompromising fighter against the occupation and partition will continue to struggle for the solution of the Cyprus problem based on the UN resolutions, the High-Level Agreements, the agreed framework of the talks, International and European Law. AKEL is interested in the solution being achieved as soon as possible, but at the same time, we are interested in the solution assuming a content that would ensure a new hopeful beginning for the whole of the Cypriot people.

#### **4. The Turkish Cypriot community**

Since the 20th Congress of AKEL until today, important developments in the socio-economic and political field have taken place within the Turkish Cypriot community. The economic crisis of 2001, but also the developments that followed in relation of the solution of the Cyprus problem during the Annan Plan procedure, created the preconditions for the formation of a balance in favour of the progressive and peace-loving forces within the Turkish Cypriot community who want a solution of the Cyprus problem. However, the period in the beginning of 2009 reversed this balance of forces.

Initially, in 2009 the so-called government, in which the Republican Turkish Party played a leading role, decided to call for early "elections" due to the economic package that was imposed by Turkey and that it was compelled to implement and in the end, it was defeated. Following that, in the so-called "presidential elections", the leadership of the community by Mehmet Ali Talat passed to Eroglou, who supports a two state solution.

The socio-economic factors of the Turkish Cypriot community also played a role in the prevalence of all the previously mentioned. The confrontations within the progressive and peace-loving forces of the community during all this period of time, but also the fact that the Republican Turkish Party did not manage to project dynamically its difference in "government", but on the contrary, it was involved in an attempt to manage the occupational regime by openly defending the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus-TRNC", also constituted significant factors concerning the previously mentioned results.

The promotion of assertions that overlooked the real causes of the so-called isolation, consolidate and stabilize partition in Cyprus, such as the implementation of direct trade, as well as the failure to fulfil these assertions, were also contributing factors to the change within the Turkish Cypriot community.

The hopes for the solution of the Cyprus problem, that were rejuvenated after the election of Demetris Christofias to the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus, were not assessed to a satisfactory level by the Turkish Cypriot leadership. The almost complete alignment of Mehmet Ali Talat with Ankara, the abandonment by the Turkish Cypriot leadership of positions for the solution of the Cyprus problem, which in the past had been agreed between AKEL and RTK, and the submitting of proposals by the Turkish Cypriot leadership, that in some cases were outside the agreed framework, caused further tensions and delays in the procedure. This fact contributed to the lowering of the aspirations for a solution and pushed masses of Turkish Cypriots to forces that do not want a solution.

The Erdogan-Gul duo very hesitantly and belatedly backed the candidacy of Talat, whilst other forces in Turkey came out openly in favour and worked for the Eroglou candidacy. This also formulated largely the result of the vote for the new Turkish Cypriot leader.

This period urgently sets once again the issue of the decisive role Turkey plays in the occupied areas. Turkey is in a position to exploit the political resolve of the Turkish Cypriot community as a pawn; both through the colonisation and radical change of the demographic structure, as well as through various institutions and organisations such as the occupational army, "civil defence", the "political affairs organisation", the "Aid Delegation of the Turkish Republic". The economic dependence of the pseudo-state on Turkey also plays a decisive role. Turkey is promoting the boosting of private capital in the occupied areas within the framework of the financial assistance it renders through the three-year "Financial Protocol" for the period 2010-2011-2012, which was signed between the "government" of the occupied areas and the Turkish government. Particularly after 2004, there is an increase in the investments of Turkish capital from Turkey to the occupied areas in the sectors of tourism and education. This fact, after the military invasion and the attempt to change the demographic structure, can also be characterised as an "invasion" in the economic field.

All these developments represent facts that on the one hand threaten the social existence of the Turkish Cypriot community and on the other hand, complicate the procedure for the solution of the Cyprus problem. The solution of the Cyprus problem is of great importance for the preservation of the existence and continuation of the identity of the Turkish Cypriot community on the island. The protection of the existence of the Turkish Cypriot community is achieved through the solution of the Cyprus problem and during the procedure to solve the problem, the Turkish Cypriot community represents a strategic partner of the progressive and democratic forces within the Greek Cypriot community.

## **6. RAPPROCHEMENT**

For AKEL, rapprochement assumes a strategic significance. During the procedure for the solution of the Cyprus problem, rapprochement with the progressive and patriotic forces of the Turkish Cypriot community is very important in the efforts to reunify and reconstruct our common country. This position is based on the internationalist ideology of AKEL, which combats nationalism, as well as on the outlook that to fight imperialism and the occupation we must build a common front of struggle, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. As important as rapprochement is during the procedure to solve the Cyprus problem, the creation of positive conditions for the implementation of the solution is equally important, but also in the conditions that will be formed afterwards.

AKEL does not view rapprochement in a superficial way. AKEL set out the policy of rapprochement and took steps to implement it immediately after the 1974 tragedy when feelings were still running high because of the Turkish invasion. Through the policy of rapprochement, we searched for ways to communicate with the Turkish Cypriot community and its liberation from its dependence on Turkey. On the other hand, battles were waged against nationalism and chauvinism inside the Greek Cypriot community.

AKEL views the rapprochement of the two communities above all as a political process. We reject approaches that consider that rapprochement is simply a question of combating prejudices through concrete work to change the psychological disposition of one community towards the other, or which separate rapprochement from the anti-occupation struggle. AKEL opposes any attempts to render rapprochement under the control of foreign centres. Rapprochement is above all and primarily the task of Cypriots themselves and the organised groups that express them.

Since the 20th Congress until now, AKEL has safeguarded and developed its relations with the Turkish Cypriot community. Continuing its participation in the meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties at Ledra Palace, at the same time it also further enhanced bilateral contacts with progressive Turkish Cypriot political parties and organisations. Our Party laying emphasis on its contacts on a central level, simultaneously seeks the development of relations also on a district level, particularly with the Republican Turkish Party . We attach importance to the broadening of these contacts and to the mass participation in rapprochement meetings with a political, cultural and social character. The organisations of the Peoples Movement of the Left also develop their activity within the same framework, developing relations with respective Turkish Cypriot organisations.

The efforts to promote common actions with Turkish Cypriot trade unions, but also the organisation of Turkish Cypriots working in the free areas, holds an important position, particularly in the activities of the class based trade union movement of the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO). The celebrations for International Workers Day on both sides of Nicosia divided by barbed wires with the participation of organisations from both communities are a fine example of the solidarity of the working people in the two communities and has strengthened class solidarity.

Such kinds of meetings are a powerful answer to the views arguing that the two communities cannot live together. These meetings forge the urgent necessity to reunify our country and people against the policies of partition for a better future, promoting the positive elements of cohabitation and drawing lessons from the negative aspects of the past of the two communities.

Our Party supports and follows closely the implementation of the proposals for the Turkish Cypriots included in the programme of the Demetris Christofias government, intervening for the solution of problems and is encouraging further steps on this issue, stressing that the Turkish Cypriots too are citizens of the Republic of Cyprus. These proposals convey clear messages towards the Turkish Cypriots, as well as to the international community.

In conditions where pessimism concerning the prospects for a solution prevail, due to the Turkish positions, the role rapprochement has to play assumes an even greater importance. Fully conscious of the previously mentioned, AKEL shall continue to fulfil all the duties it itself shoulders for the promotion of the policy of rapprochement together with the organisations of the Peoples Movement.

## **6. INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Institutional changes and reforms**

The Demetris Christofias administration has succeeded within a short time of time to promote the introduction and implementation of a range of institutional changes and policies in several important areas. These changes demonstrate the qualitative difference of the Christofias administration, but also its intensely progressive people friendly policy. These issues have plagued and troubled Cypriot society for a long time and their solution greatly benefits society as a whole and ensures the future generations in the long term.

Prime examples of such changes and policies are the definitive solution of the water problem, the settlement of agricultural debts, the safeguarding of the sustainability of the Social Insurance Fund, the upgrading of public transport, the introduction of the supporting plan for the incomes of pensioners living below the poverty line, the implementation of integrated multi-level housing policy, the elaboration of a migration policy and the solution of the issue of Akamas. Furthermore, the Decree on the minimum wage was implemented in order to support workers who are particularly vulnerable because of the conditions and terms of their employment.

At the same time, new strategies have been introduced in the Development Plans for the implementation of social and economic policy. The modernization of public administration and simplification of administrative procedures is being promoted. In this way, Cypriot society will succeed in making a step forward by winning the bet of the fight against the bureaucracy which is plaguing Cypriot society for

decades. The successful institution of Citizen Service Centers is also being extended towards this end.

Another issue that has plagued many people and the state for many years has also been resolved in a satisfactory way, namely the issue of temporary casual employees in the public service. With the bills tabled by the Government in Parliament, the provision for the permanent staying of more than 2,000 temporary staff can be provide - which will be interchangeable - as well as the regulation of the way temporary staff are hired, has been safeguarded.

In addition, the foundations of a modern urban and spatial planning and development control for the whole island has been laid, through the Plans that will put an end once and for all to the anarchic and uncoordinated development, involving the Local Authorities but also local communities in the procedures, strengthening participatory democracy and transparency, as well as the modernization and simplification of procedures.

The Reform of Local Self-government also represents a radical change. The ten-year Plan for the Reform of Local Self-government, provides for the formulation of a Unified Code of Local Self-government, the clustering of communities, the unification of services and the establishment of District Councils under the responsibility under the jurisdiction of which projects, the operation and management of infrastructure networks will be implemented.

As far as social policy is concerned, for the first time Social Tourism Schemes have been implemented that have given the possibility of subsidized vacations to insured employees on low incomes, welfare benefits recipients, pensioners and people with disabilities. Moreover, an important institutional measure is the new Department for the Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities and the modernization of the Law on Protection of Mental Disable Persons. Furthermore, the introduction of the Law to hire a quota of people with disabilities in the public and broader public sector also constitutes a significant and radical measure.

Similar institutional steps have also been made with regards family policy. The Council of Practice of Social Policy and Agency for Population and Family Policy has begun to function and is doing systematic work. In addition, the Council of Ministers has approved the First Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence in the family.

Furthermore, through intensive work and elaboration of bills and regulations that were pending for some time concerning inspection of work places, such as the Trade Union Law, the regulations on terms of employment of employees in recreation centers, the Law for Hotel Employees, the Law on the Protection of Young People into Employment have been competed. Towards this end, 14 new legislations and practice codes have been prepared.

In the field of education, the educational reform is currently being implemented.

In the energy sector for the first time were placed the foundations that will allow the implementation of an energy policy have been laid and the establishment of the Energy Policy Council is being promoted. The Public Natural Gas Company has already been set up, which began work for the implementation of the goal of importing natural gas to Cyprus in 2013. Projects are systematically being implementing in order to promote renewable resources of energy.

With regard to the National Guard, the bill that unifies and modernizes the legislation governing it, has been tabled and the question of persons who try to evade military service is being effectively tackled.

Concerning the environment, a comprehensive strategy for the management of the environment is being implemented.

### **Social policy**

Our objective is to build a modern state, which actively promotes a human centred social policy and cultivates social solidarity. From the day of assuming the Presidency, the Government of Demetris Christofias took radical measures and released enormous resources for the formulation of a multifaceted social policy.

Towards this end, the following social policy measures have been promoted:

- Introduction and enactment of Easter bonus benefit.
- Increase of low pensions through the “Support Scheme for Pensioners on Low Incomes”.
- Increase of pensions and benefits.
- Solution of the problem of the sustainability of the Social Insurance Fund.
- Assistance to live stock farmers.
- Introduction of the paraplegic people care benefit and improvement of grant for the blind with the decision to link with the movement of the Consumer Price Index.
- Increase of the minimum wage, three times in succession.
- Approval of the Law for the hiring of disabled people in public sector with specific criteria.
- Increase of benefits and other allowances to three- and four-children families.
- Increase in the incomes for enclaved people in the occupied areas.
- Upgrading of housing policy for refugees and non-refugees.
- Substantial improvement of the income criteria and significant increase in grants for housing in all the schemes for refugees
- Introduction of free transport to schools for pupils.
- Introduction of the Student Support Package that amounts to 12 millions euro.

At the same time, as AKEL, we consider that the phenomenon of poverty must be comprehensively tackled which leads to social exclusion. Despite the particularly

positive steps that have been made and which have reduced the number of people living under the poverty line, even more needs to be done especially in the sector of pensions, benefits and at the level of single parent families.

## **Economy**

Our goal is to develop a modern state in which, as far as possible within the framework of the existing system, economic growth and social prosperity will be in harmony. We support an economic policy focused on peoples needs: a multifaceted and multilevel policy for development in a mixed economy system in which the private, public and cooperative sector will harmoniously coexist and collaborate and will be mutually complementary.

To achieve this vision, the following should be ensured:

- The promotion of development at all levels through continuous adaptation to new technological research and innovation and the constant improvement of the economy's productivity.
- The defense of the social character of public interest organizations, but also their modernization in a way that will render them more flexible and more competitive within the European economic arena. The aim should be to provide more affordable and qualitative services to the people.
- The maintenance of the budget deficit and public debt at a satisfactory level so that the savings lead to the release of resources which can be channeled towards the development, modernization and renewal of the economy's infrastructure. In order to achieve this, cuts should be made in the non-productive state expenditures, operating costs of the state machinery should be reduced, tax evasion must be cracked down and interchangeability and computerization should be promoted. The large size of the state machinery creates problems.
- The upgrading of state policy in order to attract foreign productive investments, which would be diverted to big development projects, research and innovation. Development projects can also be promoted in collaboration with the public and private sector.
- The continuous improvement of the economy's productivity through technological upgrading, the improvement of technical management of the Cypriot enterprises, as well as through the continuous training of workers.
- Growth should no more be depended on the vulnerable tourism sector. This does not mean abandoning such an important sector for the economic development of the country.
- The modernization and radical reform of our tourist policy. A new strategic development plan is required in order that the Cypriot tourism acquires its own identity. The acceleration of the implementation of major tourism infrastructure projects such as marinas, golf courses, congress centers, thematic parks etc is needed. At the same time the introduction or enhancement of tourist products such as agro tourism, congress tourism, health tourism, sports and other forms of tourism are demanded that will contribute to the upgrading of our tourist product.
- The promotion of a more creative policy for transforming Cyprus into a centre for the provision of counseling services. Cyprus has an excellent technical

infrastructure, geographic location, good weather conditions and a skilled labour force, which also represents our competitive advantage. Consequently, our country, through coordinated policies, can develop the areas of finance, legal, housing, counseling and other services.

As there is an enormous potential for development in the fields of research, innovation, health and education, the development of these sectors must be among the state's priorities.

- The maintenance of the focus of economic policy on small and middle enterprises. The Cypriot small and middle enterprise faces problems of access to funding, problems with regards contemporary administrative and management problems, as well as problems concerning the utilization of research, new technologies and modern equipment. The state needs to support small business even more actively through various specialized programs and by using funds from the European Union.
- The upgrading and the modernization of the manufacturing sector. Unfortunately, this sector is declining. The small family sizes, lack of essential technology, low productivity and weaknesses at the level of administration and management have led our industry to an impasse. The improvement and modernization of existing infrastructure, provision of incentives for introducing new technologies, utilization of research and innovation, partnerships and mergers, as well as stately the support of the state and society are all priorities for the promotion of the modernization and restoration of Cypriot industry.
- The greatest possible support for the cooperative movement aiming at its modernization and further development within today's highly competitive conditions.
- The continuous vigilance to restrain inflation. The increase of prices and the speculative behavior of the oligopolies deplete working people's incomes. The efficient functioning of the Commission for the Protection of Competition, the activities of the observatory for the monitoring prices, as well as the upgrading and proper functioning of the Services for Consumer Protection constitutes the institutional bulwark against speculation.

### **Measures to face and exit the economic crisis**

Inevitably, Cyprus was bound to face the negative consequences of the world economic crisis due to the extroversion of the Cypriot economy, being particularly affected in the areas of tourism and construction, mostly in the sale of holiday residences.

These repercussions would naturally occur at a relatively later stage, as was the case.

At the same time when the USA and E.U. member states entered a deep economic recession in 2008, the Cyprus economy registered a 3.6% growth rate; it had a

financial surplus and a very low public debt, high levels of employment and low levels of unemployment.

In 2009, the Cyprus economy enters a recession stage; a time when the recession is still existent in the USA and EU although some signs of stabilization manifest themselves.

AKEL has repeatedly warned that the neoliberal, conservative positions on the free and 'unbridled' market economy concealed serious risks for modern societies and especially for the working people. Certain political parties in Cyprus supported the view that, the dominant philosophy in the economic and social sector should be the philosophy of the so-called free and creative development, without regulations or suffocating restrictions. In this way, they said, the market would regulate itself and would serve the interests of the citizens.

As developments themselves proved, this philosophy collapsed at a world level. The policies that the leadership of the Democratic Rally party and certain other spectrums suggested we should implement in Cyprus, led to the concentration of huge profits in the hands of few and to the increase of the gap between the rich and the poor worldwide. Fortunately, for the Cypriot people, with the existence of a strong Left Movement and a strong Trade-Union movement, we managed to maintain a mixed economy system in Cyprus, which allowed us to face the negative consequences of the international economic crisis.

The Government acted promptly and in the right direction, taking measures, mostly in the sector of development, aiming at boosting development and diminishing the negative effects of the crisis by supporting the vulnerable population groups through social benefits. According to the European Commission itself, the measures taken by the Government were timely and in the right direction. These measures restricted the negative consequences, even though in 2009 the economy inevitably faced a recession with a growth rate being confined to 1.7%, the deficit rising to 6.1%, unemployment reaching 5.3% and public debt to 56.2%

Specifically, the Government took the following measures:

1. Increase of the development budget by €300 million

2. It announced two economy support packages of €470 million, focusing on the tourism and construction sector (Note: one of the packages was announced in December 2008 and the other in January 2010)
3. Endowment of the Housing Financing Organization with €200 million so as to cede favorable housing loans to young couples
4. €300 million were obtained from the European Investments Bank and were deposited in banks for the support of small and medium businesses with favorable loans. Even though this move of the Government was in the right direction, the banks did not reduce their loan interest to these businesses.
5. The Government obtained and deposited in the wider banking system €3 billion with the aim to improve the liquidity and reduction of interest rates. Liquidity was improved; however, interest rates did not change. The provision of the law for the conducting of periodical inspections of banks concerning interest reduction was not implemented either.
6. Significant social support measures of vulnerable population groups were introduced:
  - Retirement pension increase
  - Public Benefits increase
  - Introduction of a Student Package
  - Increase of allowances and benefits for families with more than 4 children as well as five member families
  - Increase of assistances to the enclaved people in the occupied areas
  - Upgrade of housing funds to refugees and non-refugees
7. Announcement and implementation of support measures for employment and reduction of unemployment.

The great reduction in the state's income, the increase of the deficit to 6.1%, the high maintenance cost of the public sector and the wider public sector, as well as the reduction of consumption and the overall state income has led the Government

to announce additional measures for the improvement of the financial state. These concerned seven axes:

1. Development
2. Stamping out of tax evasion - reduction of tax evasion
3. Town-planning regulations for the issuing of housing titles (amnesty)
4. Reduction of the public sector operation cost
5. Focusing on social benefits
6. Taxing the rich

## **7. DOMESTIC FRONT - UNITY**

The election of Demetris Christofias to the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus was the result of a broader consensus within the domestic front, with the main protagonists being, besides AKEL, the parties DHKO and EDEK. The contribution of the Support Movements to the Christofias candidacy, the United Democrats, Ecologists, the Front for the Reorganisation of the Centre, the Initiative of Free Citizens and the Socialists Initiative also was of great significance. AKEL acknowledges and honours the contribution of all to the electoral success in the 2008 presidential elections, whether they backed the Christofias candidacy from the beginning, or whether they added their support along the way.

The election of Demetris Christofias showed once again how correct the constant position of AKEL is in favour of cooperation; a position that our Party insists on, despite the setbacks and disappointments by the cooperating parties from time to time.

The election cooperation and subsequently the formation of the government with the participation of AKEL, DHKO, EDEK, the Front for the Reorganisation of the Centre and personalities from the spectrums of the wider support movements for the Christofias candidacy, created the best conditions for a successful implementation of the programme of governance.

The first one and a half years of the administration, despite the differences that surfaced, was characterised by a climate of broader consensus. Even the opposition, mainly with regards the Cyprus problem, appeared to consent and back the handling of the President.

Subsequently, things have changed. A gradual worsening of the situation of the internal front began. We had the exit of EDEK from the government formation, the turn of DHSY towards an all out attack nihilistic opposition, the constant discussions within DHKO as to whether or not it should stay in the government and the extremely oppositionist behaviour of leading members of this party.

As the introduction of the current document mentions too, the situation on the domestic front is not good. Regretfully, levelling criticism, nihilistic opposition,

unjust denunciations or murmurings, demagogy and populism, extremist positions, which on many occasions have diverged from the framework of the political culture we have gained in Cyprus, are all a daily phenomena.

**These phenomena are due to the following:**

a) Political forces in Cyprus refuse to accept the fact that the Left has assumed, through the peoples vote, the administration of the country. They are seeking to denigrate everything the Christofias government is doing and to negate in the people's minds its significant work, so that nothing positive will be accredited to President Christofias and AKEL.

b) The reforms implemented by the government are reversing erroneous state of affairs, attacking vested interests and establishments. This provokes reactions from those who have had a privileged position in Cypriot society since the foundation of the Republic of Cyprus.

c) The coherent, consistent and determined effort for a bizonal bicommunal federal solution has exposed the reaction of all those forces who have never truly accepted the solution of federation and who whether they realise it or not prefer partition than federation. It is evident that the opposition to federation is also due to some extent to economic interests and establishment forces that have developed all these years of the division.

d) Petty party ambitions and pre-election expediencies are sacrificing the good of the country and people solely for the sake of party interests and machinations.

e) A section of the mass media violating every sense of objectivity and codes is taking an active part in the anti-government and anti-AKEL campaign underway.

The current situation on the domestic front provokes unnecessary confrontations and tensions. It cultivates feelings of disillusionment among the people that is translated into dangerous trends for the acceptance of the unacceptable partitionist situation on the Cyprus problem and depreciation for politics, the institutions and organised social struggle. It undermines unity and weakens the negotiating position of President Christofias. It raises obstacles to the promotion of progressive measures and reforms in the people's interests.

### **Political vigilance**

The nationalist messages often conveyed by the oppositionist rhetoric, as well as the defence of every abuse or threat in the name allegedly of free expression, strengthen the extreme right and fascist type organisations that have surfaced.

The appearance of extreme right wing and fascist type organisations is a very worrying phenomenon. The intensification of the activity of these organisations is not at all coincidental. Today when Demetris Christofias and AKEL is handling the fate of the country and any perspectives for solving the Cyprus problem exist, certain circles judge that the activity of such organisations would be useful; organisations who vehemently express their positions against the solution and the Left. They are using Nazi symbols and slogans, cultivating xenophobia and racism and reviving the ideology and practises of Grivas, proudly stating that they are the heirs of EOKA B.

The fact that these are marginal groupings must not lead to any kind of complacency. On the contrary, this necessitates vigilance also by the state and society in order to stamp out every action that is initiated outside the law, but also by every democratic political force that has the obligation to combat, expose, demystify and politically isolate every extreme right and fascist situation. Cyprus cannot afford and experience other "saviours", such as those who betrayed and handed it over to Turkey in 1974.

### **Unity based on principles**

Unity on the domestic front is an indispensable precondition for the successful outcome of the struggle for the vindication of Cyprus. All the political forces can come together on this point and work within the framework of the National Council. A broader unity is also required for the promotion of solutions to problems affecting Cypriot society and the implementation of progressive policies and reforms. Forces supporting similar approaches regarding socio-economic issues can come to an understanding on this point.

Unity is built on the basis of principles, common goals and objectives. The questioning of the goal for a bizonal bicomunal federal solution of the Cyprus problem does not contribute to the forging of unity.

Unity does not mean the levelling of different views and approaches. Unity means dialogue, respect of the entity of each political force and different opinion. Unity means a sincere effort to find convergences and cooperation based these convergences. Unity means the assumption of responsibilities and the repelling of demagoguery and populism.

The denigration of the difference in opinion, the attempt to impose one opinion on the other in the name allegedly of dialogue does not contribute to unity and the prevalence of normal relations between the political forces.

In a presidential system such as the one in Cyprus, the role of the President of the Republic in the creation and consolidation of conditions of unity is certainly very important. However, it is equally important that respect be shown to the President, his constitutional rights and recognise him the right to have an opinion and defend this opinion. AKEL believes strongly that President Christofias plays his role as a pole of unity with regards the political forces and with a deep sense of responsibility, despite the unjust attacks on him from time to time.

Unity is built on a leadership, but also grass roots level. Despite the organised attempt by certain circles to provoke tension within the domestic front, a large section of the people support with their trust the President of the Republic. Based on this evaluation and the long-standing traditional cooperation of AKEL with other forces, the possibilities for a broader political and social cooperation on the level of the common people, local self-government, organised groupings, organisations and committees that exercise power, exist and must always be constantly utilised. The duty of the cadres, members and friends of AKEL is to continuously develop these possibilities in a spirit of friendship and mutual respect; to forge bridges of mutual understanding and trust and work for the common good and strengthen even more our relations with the friends from the New Forces and the friends from various Movements who supported the Christofias candidacy. The many years of struggles in difficult times, particularly with the people of DHKO and EDEK constitute the solid long-standing basis for new beneficial cooperations.

AKEL, faithful to its history and long-standing positions, will continue to work hard for unity - both on the leadership level and on the level of the common people - with consistency, determination and a sense of responsibility. However, we shall continue to defend the dignity of our Party and the correctness of its policy with the same determination. We shall continue to defend the President of the Republic, his policy and handling of the Cyprus problem.

## **8. 2011 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND OTHER ELECTION BATTLES**

In the 2006 parliamentary elections, we succeeded once again in making our Party the first political force of the country. The 2011 parliamentary elections, as every similar procedure, is a landmark political event. In view of the elections, the parties submit their assessment and positions and the people have the opportunity to judge the political forces also through their election campaign. Election results register the influence of the parties among the people and determine the composition of the legislative body; it allows for the tabling and comparison, before the people, of the positions of the parties and determines the balance of forces for 5 years within the parliament and this unavoidably affects whatever subsequent developments.

AKEL since 1990 has formulated the policy of the broadening and renewal of its election lists and Parliamentary Group. This broadening covers personalities of the wider Left spectrum and non-affiliated Left and centre democratic spectrum. The policy of enlargement and renewal permitted the formulation of representative and victorious election lists in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006, a fact that elevated the election list of AKEL-Left-New Forces as the biggest parliamentary force and our Party as the first and leading political force in Cyprus.

The forthcoming parliamentary elections will be conducted in totally different conditions than at any time and with completely special characteristics:

1. Since 2008, Demetris Christofias, who until January 2009 was the General Secretary of the C.C. of AKEL, is at the helm of the Presidency of the Republic. AKEL today is a ruling party with an enhanced presence in government, the Administrative Councils of Semi-Governmental Organisations and other Committees and Organisations that exercise power. The very significant work the Christofias government is producing in all fields will unavoidably have its own positive impact in the influence AKEL gains in society. On the other hand, given the specific situation that exists on the domestic front, we must anticipate that the attacks against the government and our Party will intensify in view of the elections. The war of attrition against the President and AKEL will escalate.

2. During the pre-election campaign, an explosion of populism and demagogy is anticipated; a phenomenon in any case we are witnessing even now when we are far from election battles. Armed with the truth and all that we have served to the people as a Party and as a government, we must repulse, expose and condemn populism and demagogy.

3. The parliamentary elections will be waged in an environment within the mass media anything but objective and un-biased towards the government and our Party. This means that we must wage particularly fierce and decisive battles in debates on television, radio stations and in newspaper columns. Besides this, and

given the prevailing situation in the mass media, our contact with the people assumes a special significance. We must wage the main battle for the parliamentary elections through our lively daily and organised contact with the people, and particularly with the working people.

4. All the political forces will attempt to broaden their influence through corresponding actions regarding their election lists and options.

5. All the political moves towards other, and particularly after the parliamentary elections, will be made with eyes set on the 2013 presidential elections, a phenomenon that we are observing from now.

6. The parties, but also individual party candidates will spend enormous sums of money in the pre-election campaign and utilise public relations services.

Based on the previously mentioned, we must:

1. Elaborate an effective strategy and tactics, an innovative and imaginative pre-election campaign.

2. Formulate the broadest possible election lists, representative of the strength and prestige of AKEL and the Left in general.

3. Repeat and reaffirm the policy of enlargement with New Forces and renewal, through the inclusion of even more worthy and capable people from the wider spectrum, but also young and competent people from our spectrum.

4. Immediately after the Congress, we should harness and devote to the election battle all the forces of the Party and the Peoples Movement. In parallel with the political aspect, the organisational, financial and technical aspect of our election campaign must be planned promptly.

5. Intensify our efforts to promote the solutions of people's problems.

### **Local self-government elections**

The elections in local self-government represent an important democratic operation that always gathers people's interest. In modern times, this interest is enhanced because local self-government is the closest authority to people. It is involved in the solution of day-to-day problems and contributes substantially to the upgrading of the level and quality of life.

With the pioneering revision of the institutional framework for the functioning of Local Self-Government the Demetris Christofias government is promoting, significant powers and capabilities will be handed to Local Self-Government, so that with enhanced possibilities it will be possible for it to play a more essential role in the daily effort for the upgrading of peoples quality of life. Both on the level of the Local Self-Government Local Authorities and legislative and executive power, the role and presence of AKEL was and remains catalytic, substantial and vanguard. Local citizens and society itself acknowledges and welcome this role.

In view of the 2011 local self-government elections pre-election programmes must be elaborated that will define clear-cut goals, project the concern for the ordinary citizen and respond to their contemporary needs. Their implementation will mean

the further upgrading of peoples quality of living. Special emphasis should be given to health and public sanitation, the environment and ecology, social welfare, sports and culture.

Our constant goal remains the election of our most capable cadres, both party members but also broadly. We are seeking also in this election, the formulation of enlarged election lists so that they can express all the broadness of the spectrum of AKEL-Left-New Forces. The policy of cooperation and alliances must be at the centre of our attention in these elections too, especially concerning the elections of Mayors and the Presidents of Community Councils.

We want through the election lists of AKEL local representatives to be elected who through their service and struggles in society have contributed to the fulfilment of the political goals of AKEL and to the tackling of our people's problems. The demands we should have from our candidates must be upgraded so that they can meet the modern needs of our society and citizens for the enhancement of the role of local self-government and peoples living standards. In a society where vested interests and corruption are taking on dimensions, the candidates of AKEL at all levels, particularly in local self-government, must always be distinguished by their honesty, integrity of their character and determination to fight against and combat unacceptable phenomena in our society.

The same fundamental principles also apply in the case of the election of the School Boards where the prosperity of school communities should be at the centre of our attention and interest.

In both the parliamentary and local self-government elections, our Party will exhibit determination in the stamping out of the phenomena of anti-ethical behaviour and self-motivated promotion.

### **Presidential elections**

The presidential elections represent the foremost electoral procedure because its result determines which forces and with what programme will exercise power for 5 years.

Given the ongoing procedure for the solution of the Cyprus problem, this position is projected in the event that, despite our efforts, the Cyprus problem remains unsolved by 2013.

The 2013 presidential election takes on a special significance that is determined by the reality evolving as a result of the following factors:

- The election of Demetris Christofias to the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus in 2008 and consequently, the role of AKEL as a ruling party,
- The phase of the Cyprus problem as a result of the ongoing efforts that began in 2008 and thereon after the election of Demetris Christofias,
- The successful course of the implementation of the government programme in the peoples interests and,
- The situation on the domestic front.

The strategic goal for the 2013 elections remains the continuation of a progressive and democratic administration in the people's interests and at the same time, the further promotion of the modernisation of Cypriot society in a pro-peoples progressive direction.

How this goal will be fulfilled is an issue the Party must examine and decide at the suitable moment, taking seriously into account the given situation in the struggle for the solution of the Cyprus problem, the long-standing position of the Party for the achievement of broader cooperations and the given reality concerning the Christofias administration.

## **9. THE 2012 EU PRESIDENCY**

The assumption of the Presidency of the EU by the Republic of Cyprus during the second half of 2012 represents a great challenge for Cyprus. The government of Demetris Christofias is working studiously, both on the political and organisational level, for the preparation of the six-month Presidency.

Each Presidency sets out political priorities that are the outcome of consultations with both the European Commission and the trio of presidencies that are due to commence and follow. The government has exchanged views with the parliamentary parties on the specific matter. AKEL has submitted views and thoughts, contributing to the effort by the government for a programme with social priorities that will project the central role that Cyprus can play in the wider region, both with regards the cause of peace in the area and on the level of initiatives of the Union focused on international and inter-union solidarity.

AKEL calls on the political parties and Cypriot people to embrace the efforts of the government for a successful exercise of the presidency as a cause of Cyprus as a whole. It pledges that it will work and support the fulfilment of this difficult project.

## **10. THE PARTY**

### **AKEL as a ruling party**

With the election of Demetris Christofias to the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus, AKEL has undertaken new increased responsibilities and is playing an enhanced role in the political and social affairs of the country. AKEL is a ruling party in the following sense:

- a) The President was until recently the leader of the Party,
- b) The Party with its cadres, but also friends from the New Forces has a significant presence within the government,
- c) The Party, together with the friends from the New Forces, has a significant presence in the Semi-governmental and other Organisations and Commissions that exercise state power,
- d) The government programme of Demetris Christofias to a large degree is based on the programmatic positions and philosophy in the peoples interests of AKEL.

The people, acknowledging the enhanced role of AKEL, are looking towards our Party, with big expectations.

AKEL is a ruling party, but not a government party in the sense that the autonomy of the President and the government is given, as the autonomy of the Party is also given. Under no circumstances does the Party replace and substitute the government and under no circumstances does the Party lose its independent entity in relation to the government.

Our primary goal as AKEL was and remains to support with all our forces the President and his government and to assist in every way towards the implementation of the government programme. AKEL assesses that despite the difficulties and adversities the government programme is being implemented at a speedy pace and successfully. Both the pledges undertaken by President Christofias towards the people are being promoted; pledges that are also pledges given by AKEL. That is to say, to work hard for a just solution and a more just society.

AKEL is helping in the implementation of the government programme by rendering unreserved political backing to the President of the Republic and his government. It is elaborating suggestions and proposals that help towards the specification and defining of priorities during the implementation of the government programme. It is proposing solutions to problems that life itself projects and especially concerning the economic crisis. In parliament, AKEL is working so that the cooperation between the legislative and executive power is strengthened, aiming at serving the well-intentioned interests of the country.

AKEL was and remains the expression of the interests and aspirations of the broad popular strata and more particularly, of the working people. In this sense, it continues to be the force defending these interests: the force asserting and struggling for safeguarding and extension of popular interests. The existence of a government in the people's interests that does not adhere to the philosophy and practises of neo-liberalism creates a favourable environment for the successful development of social struggles. The just socio-economic demands of various social strata and groups of the population and particularly of the working people always receive the support and assistance of AKEL. Even individuals too, members of Cypriot society, face problems due to government bureaucracy, establishment forces, either to adverse discriminations. The readiness of AKEL and its cadres to help is given, always within the bounds of legality and meritocracy.

AKEL and the broader Peoples Movement are very sensitive and responsive to the messages conveyed by the common people, which it transmits to the government. On the other hand, AKEL and its cadres also have the duty to point out the difficulties arising from the economic crisis and the need to consider these difficulties in relation to whatever demands are projected. AKEL and its cadres have the duty to point out that the government programme is implemented over a five-year term and that it is not possible to change all that is bad and wrong in Cypriot society that have been accumulated through decades within the space of one or two years; to also combat the destructive mentality regarding "using the right connections" in order to secure undeserved posts, favours and privileges and to promote the consolidation of a culture of meritocracy. Given the situation existing in a large section of the mass media, the cadres and members of AKEL must inform correctly the people through their daily contact, but also through organised campaigns.

## The organisational situation of the Party

The need for an all-round qualitative improvement in the functioning and effectiveness of the Party, in combination with the efforts to monitor and combat negative phenomena and the need to solve problems arising from these, led to the 20th Congress approving a decision to hold a special Congress in the period between the 20th and 21st Congress which dealt with the organisational situation of our Party.

The decision adopted by the Organisational Congress, which took place in December 2008, pointed out that *"the organisational functioning of the Party is above all a political and ideological issue. The effectiveness of the Party and its capability to intervene in the political and social affairs of the country and the need to chart paths and formulate developments depends greatly on the organisational situation of the Party"*.

*"The outlook that views organisational work as being restricted to fulfilling certain goals of the annual action plan is wrong. Organisational work has a broader significance and mission. Its mission is to always maintain the Party combatant and ready to fulfil its multifaceted political and economic duties. The constant improvement and enhancement of our organisational situation was, and must remain a permanent goal totally linked with the character, struggles and visions of our Party"*.

How have we therefore implemented the decisions of the Pancyprian Congress, but also of the Organisational Congress that followed it? To what extent have the decisions been neglected and how far can the 21st Congress assess positively or negatively the efforts undertaken?

In evaluating the work done over the five-year period, what we must point out is that the Party mechanism was called upon to fulfil a great deal of duties. The Party cadres fulfilled their duties in a series of election battles, culminating in the unprecedented, multifaceted and substantial work, which resulted in the election of the General Secretary of the C.C. of AKEL com. Demetris Christofias to the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus.

In the significant improvement we noted in the work regarding contact with the people, not just at their place of residence, we managed to transmit the positions and the voice of the Party everywhere. On many occasions we managed to defy poll ratings and forecasts (Presidential and local-self government elections), but also views arguing that the work of informing and enlightening the people is done only through the mass media.

In the years that have elapsed, we have worked towards improving and raising the work of the Local Party Organisations (LPO): the backbone and strength of the Party. We have worked towards splitting up big LPO's and promoted the more systematic functioning of the LPO's, the correct functioning of the Bureaus of LPO's, their staffing through the promotion of new cadres and the growth of the Party with new members from the youth and women's movement and the upgrading of the content of party meetings. We had a stronger presence in the area where the LPO is called upon to develop its work. The intervention of the Party was evident and apparent.

We have advanced the comprehensive recording of the members of the Party and we are in a position today to note in detail the composition of the Party. This helps us in specifying goals and exercising better control over results.

Substantial steps have also been made in the proper and effective functioning of the Advisory Departments for the elaboration of policy proposals, but also in the field of Party factions/sections in mass associations and organisations where we had significant shortcomings. Our contact with Party cadres and friends participating in various broad associations has been put on a sound and good basis.

However, despite the efforts and the steps being made, serious weaknesses and shortcomings remain that we must turn our attention to. Where do we pin point these problems?

### **1. Better and more substantial functioning of bodies, from the C.C. to the Bureau of the LPO**

The Party bodies need to improve the content of their work even more at all levels. The decision of the Organisational Congress points out, inter alia, that, *"...the leading bodies of the Party at all levels function and implement their decisions. However, this work is carried out with various difficulties, whose degrees vary; difficulties related to the functioning of bodies and the extent members fulfil their duties in the daily work of the Party; difficulties created by the lack of cadres and the hesitancy often in assigning responsibilities to new comrades with new ideas and a zeal for work; difficulties arising from relaxation and self-motivating promotion which continue to surface within the ranks of the Part and are a restraining factor in the efforts for the quantitative and qualitative enhancement of our work"*.

In a constructive and self-critical way, through collective style of work, each body of the Party must aim at the daily improvement of its work and effectiveness.

2. Based on the new given situation, the **Advisory Departments of the C.C. and the District Committees** must upgrade their role even more. The Departments assume the responsibility of providing the leading bodies of the Party with research and proposals regarding various aspects of political, social and party life. In the new conditions, it is imperative that they have a concrete and clear picture surrounding the programme of governance in relation to their specific fields and its course of implementation. The adequate and proper staffing of the Departments is an essential element that will help towards fulfilling their duties.

3. **Steps have been made forward regarding the functioning of LPO's.** We are advancing more systematically towards the division of large LPO's, the more regular functioning of the Bureau's of LPO's, the further upgrading of the content of the meetings of LPO's, but also in the very content of their activities. The issue of member's attendance, in combination with the question of detached members, must constantly be among the priorities of our work. Difficulties exist and problems surface, however we must move ahead, focused on our goals.

4. We continue to have weaknesses in our **contacts and systematic communication with the people**, as well as in developing broader participation but also monitoring our participation in various associations. The transmission of the Party's policies and more broadly of the government today and on a daily basis among the people is the key to the success in our work. This duty must be

cultivated in the consciousness of the party membership as a whole, which should double its efforts even more. All the cadres of the Party must have the issue of our contact with the people as their daily concern.

5. **Promotion of cadres and the recruitment of new members.** Steps are being taken; however, we must proceed more decisively towards this end. We must exhibit more determination at all the Party levels to assign responsibilities to young people. At the same time, even more work that is systematic must be done, in cooperation with the youth and women's movement, to increase the members of the Party, as well as more intensive work for the assimilation of new members and their proper and suitable utilisation in our work.

6. In the decision of the Organisational Conference, the following was noted: *"The mechanism of full-time party cadres is the daily vehicle for the promotion of the policies and other decisions of the Party's leading bodies, consequently the qualitative improvement in its work is also a fundamental duty...it is imperative that a comprehensive study is promptly conducted based on the contemporary needs of society and to proceed without hesitation to staff the gaps, both in the mechanism of the C.C and the District Committees of the Party"*. Despite the fact that we have made recruitments to cover some gaps, nevertheless we have not proceeded based on a planned project, something that we must set in motion. At the same time, the issue concerning our **voluntary mechanism, the backbone of our Party**, must concern us on a daily basis; a mechanism that must be strengthened and constantly renewed. We must combat the phenomena of weariness and disenchantment that often surfaces as a result of all the work being loaded on some comrades. Every Party member, from the grass roots but also cadres in public and other posts, must participate in voluntary work.

7. The **phenomena of weariness and self-motivated promotion** have still not been eradicated. The Party must continue its efforts towards this end by insisting on the respect and adherence to the constitutional principles and rules of the Party and by enhancing the ideological and political level of Party members.

#### **"Charavghi" newspaper**

*"The need to buy and study "Charavghi" on a daily basis is a permanent ideological and political duty, which is why the propagation of our representative voice and the boosting of its circulation is an organisational task with an important political content. The negative phenomenon of a wider relaxation, the problems created by the loss of newspaper sellers and the multitude of mass media, and especially of the electronic media, adversely affects the increase in the circulation of "Charavghi". The increase in the circulation of "Charavghi" must constantly be at the centre of the attention of all Party bodies; central, district, local but also of all the Party membership"*.

This decision adopted by the Organisational Congress reflects the constant duty of the Party mechanism to deal with issue of the propagation of "Charavghi" so that our voice can be close to the people on a daily basis and the daily disseminator of the Party's positions and proposals. The work carried out towards this end is not continuous, has shortcomings and has not so far brought the results to enable us to assess them as positive.

We assess the steps that have been made towards improving the appearance and content of our newspaper as positive, an indispensable and helpful element in the

efforts to increase its circulation. Regretfully, these steps have not been accompanied by an increase in the circulation of the newspaper. This problem needs to be tackled on an overall basis. To tackle this problem in an all-round way we have conducted a research and study among the people concerning "Charavghi".

Above all, the Party membership needs to realise the political necessity of the daily study of "Charavghi". The fact that there are still members, and even cadres, who do not realise how important the purchasing and study of "Charavghi" is constitutes an ideological and political problem which must constantly preoccupy the Party bodies and LPO's.

Bearing also in mind the negative environment within the mass media, we need to find ways to increase but also to stabilise the daily subscribers of the newspaper. The problems faced by the subscribers in acquiring the newspaper from street newsstands, in conjunction with the problem of finding newspaper sellers or likewise the loss of regular newspaper sellers and their non-replacement, is the biggest organisational problem we face. The LPO's must concern themselves more systematically with the issue of securing subscribers and constantly reflect on finding ways to solve the problems in relation to the circulation of "Charavghi".

### **The Parliamentary Group of AKEL-Left-New Forces**

Since February 2008, our Party is a ruling Party and this means the people have increased responsibilities, duties and expectations from AKEL. Within this framework, the work of the Parliamentary Group, within and outside Parliament, is immensely significant given the reflection and positive contribution it can have in the efforts to gradually implement the government programme.

Our fundamental political duty is to rally our forces in the efforts to solve the Cyprus problem and reunify our country, whilst at the same time to project the work, decisions and innovations of the government. At the same time, we must repulse the oppositionist attacks by the DHSY party and others and reply with arguments to any criticism. In addition, a fundamental aspect of the daily work of the Parliamentary Group is our substantial contact with the people, the solution of problems, whether collective or individual, but also to convey the message that we shall continue to combat mentalities relating to clientism and favouritism. Our goal is a just society.

The results of the recent elections (presidential, parliamentary and local self-government) have elevated our Party as the leading political force of the country and we must precisely address in a serious way every citizen, organised group and association. The fundamental preconditions for the fulfilment of these goals are the steady improvement in the militancy, readiness and effectiveness in our work, both within and outside of parliament. Two parameters that determine these successes are the correct political and ideological line, and our strong organisation.

All of these factors are now a daily practise in parliamentary activity and the Parliamentary Group must always be ready to fulfil its tasks. Subsequently, a more systematic and concrete cooperation with the Party District Committees, Advisory Departments and the organisations of the Peoples Movement is demanded. It is essential that we anticipate developments and be vigilant, and not simply react to them.

Furthermore, an important part of parliamentary work must be to make the solution of issues through legislative proposals on a more regular basis. At the same time, the aspect of the study of legislation should not be confined but extended to fields where serious room for improvement exists. Within this framework, the comprehensive knowledge of the Party's positions is important.

In organisational terms, we are looking ahead to the better cooperation between Members of Parliament, parliamentary assistants and the District Committees of the Party and the mass organisations of the Peoples Movement: an area where, despite the improvement registered, there is a lot of room for enhancing our work. Within this framework, our contact with people, local communities, organised groups and associations was in general satisfactory. However, there are instances quite justifiably, where more contact with the grass roots of the Party and more effectiveness are expected.

More specifically, concerning the promotion and solution of collective, local community and individual demands and others, it is our common conviction that the Members of Parliament must be in the front line, however, always within the limits of responding to a reasonable and just demand. However, there are instances where the involvement with the solution of demands affects the preparation of legislation in a negative way.

The scientific support of parliamentary work is an institution that has helped towards the upgrading of the parliamentary work of the Parliamentary Group, the Peoples Movement however to a lesser degree. There is room in some cases for the research assistants to be more involved in the life of the movement and contribute even more. In general, we note the positive contribution of this practise and simultaneously we stress the possibilities offered and which must be utilised, especially in the preparation of legislative work and the promotion of the Party's goals.

The House of Representatives is the daily arena where a fierce confrontation between policies and ideas and extreme criticism is waged. Consequently, the duty of all the members of the Group is to be on constant alert so that our Party should always be the progressive and leading force in social, political and economic life. Mainly however the Party should continue to enjoy the deep respect and acknowledgement in people's consciousness, as it has managed to do so in its 84 years of service and struggles.

In general, the presence and activity of the Parliamentary Group of AKEL-Left-New Forces within the House of Representatives in the period since the previous Congress was characterised by collective work and spirit, seriousness and respect towards the rest of the Parliamentary Groups and Parliamentary rules. However, there is considerable and serious scope for improving with regards political and organisational work, a fact that we must address also concerning the composition of our Parliamentary Group. As the biggest and the strongest political party in numbers of Cyprus, the demands on the Parliamentary Group and its members are correspondingly higher, so that it can vindicate the trust of the people's vote. Possibilities and prospects exist.

The great effort to solve the Cyprus problem and implement the progressive programme of the government in the people's interests is supported mainly by the Party and rests on the Party. Consequently, the Parliamentary Group undertakes a heavy load of this duty. In order to fulfil this duty, a better coordination with the

government and mutual efforts towards this end is required. In addition, the better utilisation of the possibilities provided by the debate on issues tabled on Chapter D is imperative. We must react decisively to circumstantial oppositionist cooperations in parliament that are aiming to damage the government and our Party, as well as to the unacceptable phenomena regarding the violation of Parliament's set of rules and the abuse of powers by Presidents of Parliamentary Committees.

### **Mass associations - Party factions/sections**

Today mass associations and organisations play a multifaceted and important role that affects all aspects of contemporary Cypriot society. Both their number, but also intervention, is increasing daily. Associations, scientific, professional organisations, environmental and cultural and so many others are being founded daily due to the needs of social groups of the population.

Hundreds of cadres, members, even friends of the Party are active in a number of broad or specialised mass associations on a local, district and pancyprian level. Through their activity, they are contributing to the promotion and solution of many diverse problems. They are intervening so that the mass associations can adhere to a progressive direction to the benefit of working people and society in general.

Without any intent to manipulate them, as a Party we are obliged to ensure a more organised and methodical presence and intervention within these associations and organisations. This is necessary in order to contribute even more to the significant work carried out by the mass associations. On the other hand, this will also help the Party to acquire a better knowledge and outlook concerning the problems special groups and the population as a whole face.

Since the previous Congress, very significant steps have been taken in this direction. Through our systematic work, we have managed to have contact and organise our intervention in a great number of professional and scientific associations.

The possibilities in this field are great. Often members, but also supporters of the Party who are participating in various associations act on their own, without adequate contact and leadership. This reduces the possibility of acquiring a more general knowledge about developments and of formulating a correct policy to tackle the many social and other problems.

With the setting up and functioning of Party factions/sections, we ensure collective work and render correct leadership. Furthermore, we ensure decentralisation, coordination and organising the way our comrades and friends develop contacts within the various mass associations.

The organised factions/sections of the Party in professional - trade union areas have grown and multiplied in recent years and have recorded notable successes. However, there is scope for improving their activity further. At the same time, due to the widening of the possibilities and needs, the need constantly arises to establish Party factions/sections in new areas.

With the experience accumulated so far, it should be noted that the functioning of the various factions/sections depend on the degree the corresponding Advisory Department functions. In areas where a Party Advisory Department exists and

functions adequately, factions/sections can also function which can attain notable successes. However, where Advisory Departments do not function or weaknesses are noted in their functioning, we do not manage to set up Party factions/sections in mass associations and organisations.

It is important that the Party faction/section does not limit its activity to election battles and transform itself into an electoral mechanism. Continuous activity, the undertaking of initiatives, the regular convening of meetings and the constant upgrading in its work is required. Otherwise, the Party faction/section will be led to decline and dissolution. The leading bodies of the Party at all levels must follow and guide the Party factions/sections. They need to have a picture of the activity they are developing and promptly intervene so that any weaknesses and gaps that may surface will be overcome.

### **Non-governmental organisations**

Non-governmental organisations are playing an ever-increasing role in the contemporary world, which are dealing with specialised issues and activities. Both within the European Union and outside it, there is an atmosphere encouraging and supporting the creation and functioning of non-governmental organisations. The motives are not always innocent, in the sense that evidently the ruling circles are trying to render to the non-governmental organisations the character and content of a counterweight to organised social and class struggles and to party and trade union action. AKEL disagrees with this outlook, which we consider as another expression of neo-liberalism. This of course does not mean that we adopt a hostile stand towards non-governmental organisations. This is far from the truth. We consider that many of these organisations play a positive and significant role and cover gaps in fields where traditional organised forces have not extended their activity. AKEL calls on the members and friends of the Party to become active in non-governmental organisations and convey the progressive social and political positions of the Peoples Movement within them. Non-governmental organisations are not the places to set up party factions/sections. However, a better contact of Party members active in them with the Party will help towards an interactive dialogue between the Party and that section of society, which covers the non-governmental organisations.

### **The international progressive movement and the international relations of the Party**

International relations represent a very important part of the work of our Party, especially in the current political context of the world and Cyprus. Through the multifaceted development of our international relations, the possibility is given to draw invaluable experiences, develop coordination, cooperation and joint action together with the other Communist, Workers and progressive parties based on common goals and objectives. Based on our internationalist ideology, through international relations we seek to express our substantive and practical solidarity with the peoples suffering from imperialist wars, interventions or internal oppression and the violation of rights and freedoms.

Undoubtedly, the drawing of support and solidarity in the struggle of our people for liberation from the occupation always constituted a priority for the development of our international relations. The support and solidarity the Cypriot people receive from the parties and forces of the Left, who with consistency and steadfastness are on the side of AKEL and our people in general, is invaluable.

The progressive movement is continuing its struggle in particularly adverse conditions after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the community of Socialist states in Europe. The situation regarding the progressive movement has not witnessed a great change in the period that has elapsed since our last Congress, even though it must be pointed out that partial positive steps have been registered at various levels. More specifically, the diversity and lack of ideological and political homogeneity that exists between the parties of the Left or even the existence of heterogeneity within some of these parties has not vanished. As a result, the progressive movement continues to display the well-known deficits with regards ideological-political cohesion.

Based on the above mentioned, our policy is to continue to work for the greatest possible cooperation, coordination and unity between the Communist, Workers and progressive parties on a regional and international level, aiming at joint actions and positions, where and whenever this is feasible and based on the respect of the peculiarities/conditions of each given party.

Consequently, we do not approve of any attempts, from wherever they may come from, which adhere to the logic of exclusions, paternalism and the guardianship of the movement, intervention in the internal affairs of other parties and the undertaking of hasty initiatives that can harm the effort to build the maximum possible unity between the parties of the Left.

Of course, this does not negate the right of each party to maintain a critical view concerning the realities in the spectrum of the Left, always of course within the framework of mutual respect.

AKEL, in the period that has elapsed since its previous Congress, participated actively in the annual International Meetings of the Communist and Workers Parties, as well as in thematic and regional meetings that were organised. Despite the room for improvement that we assess exists in this custom, nonetheless we should note the steps for its strengthening as positive, as well as the need for us to seek an even more active participation within it.

During this period, we have continued our participation with the status of observer, and not as a full member, in the European Left Party (ELP), since the conditions regarding the foundation of the ELP and the hasty actions that were taken, but also some of the positions it upholds, did not permit the maturing of the conditions that would have created the preconditions for an overall and comprehensive unity of the Left in Europe.

Not only has this situation not ceased to exist, but it has deteriorated further. Consequently, we must maintain our relations with the ELP at the same level it exists today, since given the existing situation and reality no change whatsoever in our position is justified.

On a European level, we also participate actively in the Confederal Group of the European United Left-Nordic Green Left (GUE-NGL) in the European Parliament and in the Group of the European Left in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Concerning the promotion of the Cyprus problem, we have systematic contacts with all the political groups within the European Parliament and the PACE.

As AKEL, it is imperative that we continue and intensify our activity and intervention so that we safeguard the unity and cohesion of our Groups and particularly of GUE-NGL in the European Parliament, strengthening at the same time their effectiveness.

The hideous face of the imperialist world order, neo-liberal globalisation and the ongoing capitalist crisis have created preconditions for the further growth of the resistance of the peoples and working people.

The inherent contradictions of capitalism and the accumulated deadlocks it gives rise to and reproduces are leading more and more people to realise that the future of humanity cannot be the current socio-economic system.

The barbarity capitalism is leading humanity towards is becoming increasingly evident to the peoples and working people, despite the powerful mechanisms of ideological manipulation and assimilation it has at its disposal.

It is imperative that the forces of the Left utilise the conditions being formed, channelling the reaction of the peoples and workers towards the organised struggle for the defence and extension of their rights. At the same time, based always on the peculiarities of each case, organised struggles and attempts to gain political power must be connected dialectically with the only alternative option in view of capitalism's deadlocks: the perspective of socialism.

The successes of the Left in a number of Latin American countries through many years of struggles and broader cooperation represent a hopeful development for the progressive movement and show the existing possibilities, even in a continent that the USA has always considered as its own backyard.

The strengthening of the intervention and activity of the class based trade union movement within the structures of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) is another positive development.

The activity of the world peace movement has also correspondingly significantly boosted its activity through the World Peace Council that has enhanced its prestige, whilst new forces have joined its ranks.

Regarding the world youth movement of the Left, the progressive steps that have been registered over the past few years have led to the consolidation of the particularly significant presence and activity of the World Federation of Youth and Students.

The international radical women's movement, despite the difficulties it continues to face due to the negative developments with the dissolution of the socialist camp, has taken steps forward in its activity, whilst the preconditions have improved for the consolidation of the anti-imperialist character of the Women International Democratic Federation.

Regarding the social forums on an international, regional and national level, that were established aiming at combating capitalist globalisation, these continue to develop their activity, even though in comparison with the initial stages of their creation they have recorded a decline. Our goal must remain the development of the cooperation of the Left with the forces composing the movement and the constant effort to forge their class-based and anti-imperialist orientation.

The activity of the Party on an international and regional level has been noteworthy and multifaceted.

Relations with fraternal Parties all over the world have developed further. We participated in a series of international and regional meetings. We have organised and hosted regional meetings, whilst we also took a number of initiatives to express solidarity with struggling peoples. We utilised every available podium so that we could inform about developments surrounding the Cyprus problem and gain support for the anti-occupational struggle of our people.

In today's crucial conditions, it is imperative that we continue and intensify the efforts to internationalise the Cyprus problem and gain solidarity with the struggle of our people, by backing the huge efforts of the President of the Republic Demetris Christofias for the liberation and reunification of Cyprus.

We must aim at the further strengthening of our bilateral relations with ideologically fraternal interrelated parties in Europe, aiming at the same time to maintain and strengthen our links with our fraternal Parties from the much-suffering Middle East and Latin America, where radical developments are underway, as well as with the fraternal Parties of Africa and Asia. Having the promotion of the cause of Cyprus as our goal, we should extend our relations also with parties beyond the spectrum of the Left.

We must continue to undertake initiatives, both in Cyprus and on a multilateral level, to express our solidarity with the peoples and working people who need our support and practical assistance.

### **Ideological front, ideological work**

The ideological struggle, as an expression of the wider class struggle, is continuing as relentlessly as the struggle on the political and economic front too. As long as class societies exist, there will also be class ideologies defending one or the other social class and the struggle between these ideologies. All the propaganda surrounding the so-called "end of ideologies" and alleged extinction of the class barriers between the Left and the Right, are nothing more than another ideological project to serve the interests of the bourgeois class. Today, the ruling bourgeois ideology is consciously cultivating anti-communism, the vilification of Marxism-Leninism, de-ideologicalisation, apathy and an aversion towards organised struggle. By using the dominant ideological mechanisms and from a position of strength, it has the capability of imposing its own outlook and approach regarding various phenomena and developments.

Anti-communism is today on the rise in various countries. The most unacceptable form of anti-communism is the ongoing attempt to equate communism with fascism. Indeed, in some countries in Europe, legislation is being promoted which criminalizes the activity and symbols of the Communist Left. The exacerbation and upsurge of anti-communism in our times is not an accidental phenomenon. The world economic crisis has exposed in the most painful and categorical way the inherent deadlocks, enormous contradictions, flagrant injustices and inhuman character of the capitalist exploitative system. Aroused consciousnesses, especially among working people, are searching for the alternative in the idea of socialism. This is what alarms and terrifies the ruling monopolistic ruling class. That is why it

is trying to ridicule and negate socialist values and ideals in working people's consciousness by all means, seeking mainly to prevent them from taking the path of conscious organised struggle.

Cyprus from time to time has suffered from anti-communism. The existence of a powerful Left movement did not permit anti-communism to assume the dimensions it had taken in other countries. However, this fact must not make us complacent. On the contrary, we must intensify our ideological and political vigilance by repulsing the anti-communist and anti-AKEL attacks from whatever quarters they are being waged.

The prevailing atmosphere of the ruling bourgeois ideology unavoidably also affects the ranks of the Peoples Movement. Negative phenomena, such as complacency, insufficient fulfilment of party tasks, reduced voluntary work, indifference and self-motivating promotion are due to this prevailing atmosphere; phenomena we cannot compromise with by invoking the change in conditions, but which we must constantly repulse and combat. The intensification of our ideological work represents a fundamental factor in our successful combating of these negative phenomena.

Within Cypriot society, the phenomena of corruption and interweaving vested interests are growing. The exposure and combating of these phenomena certainly assumes an ideological dimension too that the ideological work of the Party must not evade.

The fundamental principles of our own Marxist-Leninist outlook, vision for socialism, internationalism, the contemporary reflections within the international progressive movement must constantly be at the centre of our ideological work. The upholding of the organisational principles that govern the functioning of our Party, which ensure its ideological-political steadfastness and more effective intervention in the affairs of Cypriot society, must also be at the centre of our attention. At the same time, the militant defence of our ideology, exposure of the deadlocks, contradictions and illusions of bourgeois ideology, the well substantiated revealing and disclosure of the anti-peoples character of neo-liberalism, the struggle against nationalism-chauvinism, the fight against sub-culture and cosmopolitanism assume in the particular conditions of Cyprus, not only an ideological, but also an enormous political significance.

With Demetris Christofias at the helm of the Cypriot state and AKEL as a ruling party, we have increased tasks with regards the field of ideological work, given that the confrontation with all those fighting against the President and our Party assumes not only a political, but also an intense ideological content. The persuasive projection of the correctness of the policies we are implementing, both with regards the Cyprus problem but also concerning domestic socio-economic policy, the well documented portrayal of the pro-peoples character of the current administration, the exposure of demagogic, unfeasible and at times manipulative pseudo-patriotic positions by other political spectrums are all duties more effectively promoted when based on a strong ideological foundation.

The 20th Congress of AKEL pointed out gaps in our ideological work, both within the Party itself as well as outside the Party, in society. Towards this end, a lot of work has been done in recent years, which however has not reached the desired levels. The decision of the Central Committee for the foundation of a Party School and promotion of the establishment of a Research Institute will make a decisive

contribution to the enhancement of our ideological work, the ideological all-round education of Party cadres and members and towards our ideological intervention in society. The decision taken was the first step. It is imperative that the new C.C. implements this decision in a concrete way.

### **Vigilance**

Vigilance is part of daily party work. Vigilance is neither more important nor less significant than the rest of the party work; it is a constituent part of party work. AKEL is the Party of the working class and the working people. It is a big national political force. As a mass political Party, AKEL needs to be constantly informed about the ongoing various developments and phenomena so that it will be in a position to correctly formulate its policy and tactics. On the other hand, it must be in a position to anticipate and prevent possible actions against it and its cadres.

The verbal and insulting threats made against the President of the Republic, the General Secretary and other leading cadres of the Party are being repeated almost daily by the extreme right wing, neo-fascist and anarchist elements and situations. That is why we must be vigilant and on guard.

Taking into account the crucial period Cyprus is going through, the party/political vigilance is the duty of all the members and cadres of the Party and it is imperative that it is intensified and upgraded.

## **11. WORKING PEOPLE AND THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT**

The 20th Congress of AKEL had assessed as an important breakthrough, the ending of the decade long administration of the Democratic Rally party, and its removal from the power. This 10-year administration was characterized by an unprecedented attack of the neo-liberal and conservative forces of society.

We do not ignore or underestimate the progress made in the areas of social and employment policy, during the previous government. We, however, assess that the election of Demetris Christofias to the Presidency of the Republic in 2008 was a qualitative and decisive change, which created for working people and their movement, new conditions and prospects for progress and prosperity.

The peoples mandate has elected in the administration of the country, a President who comes from the Left and the workers' movement, a President with a progressive and popular programme, which fully meets the demands and aspirations of workers and the people in general.

With the election of Demetris Christofias, Party's main objective remains the practical implementation of this social programme and of the pledges, we have made towards the working people.

During the two and a half years of governance, a rich and substantive work has been produced and significant progress has been made. Moreover, radical changes promoting modernization are being implemented which are becoming perceptible by society and safeguard the major achievements of the working people and our people, despite the adverse conditions the global economic crisis has caused.

The welfare state has been expanded. The institution of Automatic Cost of Living Allowance (ATA) has been safeguarded. A definitive end has been put to any

attempt to sell-out organizations of common utility. Industrial relations and social dialogue have been supported and deepened.

An important achievement is the fortification of the sustainability of the Social Insurance Fund (SIF), which is an important victory of the workers. Furthermore, for the first time, a real reserve is created for the SIF.

Social benefits and allowances have increased substantially, providing practical support to the vulnerable groups of the population, such as pensioners, recipients of public assistance, the disabled and others whose incomes have increased by over 20%. The minimum wage has been increased significantly, whilst the housing programs have been expanded substantially, to cover the special needs of the low paid and refugees. For the first time, social tourism schemes are implemented.

Noticeable change can be ascertained also with regards the overall government relations towards the workers' movement, especially as regards the respect of the social dialogue procedure, the tripartite cooperation (i.e. government, employers and workers) and of collective negotiations, but also the issues concerning the process for resolving disputes and the renewal of collective agreements.

The full membership of Cyprus in the European Union, both in the social and economic field, has created new conditions that affect the working people and their gains, as AKEL had predicted and warned.

EU policies, as expressed through Directives or Strategies, reflect the negative balance of forces in decision-making centres that are inspired by the neo-liberal philosophy, which unfortunately dominates on an EU level.

Employers and big capital within the EU are continuously intensifying their attacks on working people's rights, seeking to devalue labour, undermine stable employment regulated by collective agreements and to reduce the role of the trade union movement. The deregulation policies for employment, with the promotion of the so-called flexible forms of employment, the attempt to extend working hours and the constant attacks against the character of social security and the rights of insured workers, occupy prominent positions in these efforts.

In these circumstances, the class-based trade union movement is becoming increasingly necessary and essential. The rallying of working people, their organization and resistance against the employers' attacks, are fundamental prerequisites for the defence of their economic, social and trade union gains.

Especially today, with the worsening of the workers' condition, which is a result of the expansion and deepening of the global economic crisis, the need for collective action is even more imperative.

The current world economic crisis is a crisis of capitalism and especially of its extreme neo-liberal model.

Of course, the workers have not created this crisis. However, even though the workers have no responsibility at all, they are usually called upon to pay the cost and consequences of the crisis.

Despite the fact that in Cyprus, compared to other countries, we do not experience so intensely its impacts, the crisis has inevitably affected our small and open

economy. As a natural result of the crisis, we had an increase of unemployment and the dramatic reduction of state revenues, thereupon the fiscal deficit and public debt have risen.

In these circumstances, our Party and the broader Movement of the Left, standing on principles, are struggling daily so that working people will not pay the cost of the impact of the crisis' consequences.

In relation to other countries where right-wing conservative forces are in power, for the Cypriot workers it is a huge advantage, that during these difficult conditions the management of the impact of the world economic crisis is being conducted by a government which considers the protection and improvement of the peoples living standards and the maintenance of social balance, as its top priorities.

We note with satisfaction that the government of Demetris Christofias, tackles in a just and balanced way the problems that the crisis has accumulated. Through timely and concrete measures, the government is steadfastly implementing a human-centred policy characterized by social sensitivity.

So far, two supportive packages of 500 million Euros have been allocated, whilst particular emphasis has been put on the implementation of the measures adopted to boost employment and restrict unemployment. Moreover, the weaker and vulnerable groups of the population has received substantial support through measures such as the economic support of 60 million Euros given to pensioners on low incomes, the increase in public assistances by 18.3%, the increased benefits given to large and three-children families, the support given to the single-parent families etc.

In these circumstances, for our Party the maintenance and growth of ordinary people's living standards, particularly of vulnerable social groups, is, apart from a question of social awareness and solidarity, an important measure for the recovery of the economy's growth rates.

As AKEL, even though we show the maximum responsibility and understanding that the circumstances require, the philosophy that guides our activity is that the effects from the crisis must be borne by those who have the greatest economic potentials.

We back the efforts undertaken by the Government for the improvement of the economy. We are satisfied with the philosophy of the measures proposed. These proposals are balanced measures that distribute equitably the burdens of the crisis' consequences; they do not burden by any means the workers only. On the contrary, radical changes are targeted, such as the stamping out of tax evasion, taxation of large properties, severe reduction in the State's operating costs through retrenchment and healthy sound governance of economic affairs, the targeting of social benefits in a just and credible way and the imposition of an additional tax on the big profits of companies for social solidarity.

AKEL supports the trade union organization of the Left, the Pan-Cyprian Federation of Labour (PEO), and is working closely with it for the defence and expansion of workers' rights. In the period under review, PEO has expanded its role and influence within the trade union movement and has character as a modern, effective and class-based trade union.

The Party's intervention in other trade union spectrums has been strengthened substantially, for example in the public service and among teachers.

Taking into account the general situation prevailing within the EU, the intensification of the aggressiveness of big capital, as well as the demands and aspirations of workers from the government of Demetris Christofias, AKEL will strongly support the trade union movement in its struggles and demands in these main fields based on the following axes:

- The implementation of the governmental program in the people's interests,
- The defence of the social character of the state and protection of the social insurance system,
- The effective resistance against the employers' attacks and the continuous efforts to undermine the system of collective negotiations and collective agreements,
- The promotion of institutional and legislative measures for the empowerment of the workers' right to organize themselves in trade unions and for their protection against the arbitrariness of employers,
- Greater effective control and the implementation of the Law on safety and health at the work place. The further upgrading of the society's sensitivity on discrimination matters and the implementation of the legislations on equality and parity in practice,
- The promotion of a more just distribution of the results of economic growth and the protection of the weakest social groups, especially of women and young people,
- The coordination with the rest of the Left progressive forces in the European area, for the strengthening of the struggle against neo-liberalism, against the anti-peoples policies of the EU's ruling circles and the promotion of the positions for a different Europe characterized by social sensitivity and respect for workers' rights,
- The goal of enhancing of the role of the class-based progressive forces in the International Trade-Union Movement is achieved through the strengthening of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), which is in a process of recovery and reconstruction and which we need to follow and support.

The fundamental and elementary duty of the members of AKEL is to play a vanguard and leading role in their trade union organizations. Within the ranks of PEO, and through other trade union organizations, such as the Pancyprian Public Employees Trade Union, the teachers and bank employees and others, the members of AKEL must be vanguard cadres and through their actions and fighting militant spirit continue to inspire and guide the working people.

## **12. FARMERS - AGRICULTURAL MOVEMENT**

AKEL has always been in favour of the formulation of a comprehensive agricultural policy, which must have people and their needs at the centre of its focus. Based on its programmatic positions, AKEL submits proposals and promotes all the

necessary measures at the levels of executive and legislative power in order to achieve the goal of supporting, reinforcing and developing the rural economy.

In the last five years, the field of agriculture has had to face the problems arising from harmonisation with the *acquis communautaire*, suffered greatly from the extended drought and water shortage, and has felt great pressure from the economic crisis, but also the liberalisation of the markets in agricultural products.

In the last five years, AKEL has worked hard in order to promote a series of issues related directly to the accession of Cyprus to the EU. These issues are mainly related to spatial planning and to the provision of income support to specific sectors with a view to absorbing the shocks of accession and the changes in traditional forms of support and marketing.

The government programme of Demetris Christofias, in the shaping of which AKEL had a primary and catalytic role, began to be implemented in March 2008. We monitor and contribute to the implementation of this programme in relation to the broader agricultural sector. We assess the progress achieved and work towards its full implementation, which will upgrade the broader agricultural sector within the emerging conditions of climate change.

The effort to tackle the consequences of the extended drought and water shortage by the granting of €64.5 m. to 17 agricultural sectors gave a boost to the rural economy and support to the farmers. At the same time, the settlement of agricultural debts by the granting of a lump sum of €35 million, in the midst of the global economic crisis, is proof of the political will of the Christofias government to support the rural economy and create conditions for its further development. A long-standing demand of the Peoples Movement has finally found response by the enactment of the law on Centralised Water Management and the establishment of an Advisory Water Management Committee. In recognition of the many years of hard work and contribution to society of the Potato Council and its role in the development of the rural economy, the government has promoted an amendment to the law that modernises the Council and makes it more flexible and competitive.

We are about to commence discussions on changes to the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy at the EU level. AKEL will make every effort to promote positions and proposals that will:

- Upgrade community agriculture and offshore fishing,
- Take seriously into account the specific conditions and differences of each member state in the shaping of its agricultural and fisheries policy,
  
- Provide effective support the small-to-medium sized family agricultural households,
  
- Secure food safety and food sufficiency on a national level,
  
- Set aside policies that were based on the uncontrolled laws of a so-called free market and so-called unbridled competition.

The aim of AKEL continues to be to ensure sustainability in agricultural development, and to provide support and assistance to farmers and to inhabitants of the countryside in general based on their multiple functionalities and their role

as managers of the natural environment within the framework of regional development. To this end, AKEL will support all efforts to ensure full co-ordination of the two basic pillars of agricultural development: the development funds of the State Budgets for the rural economy and the various measures of the Programme for Agricultural Development 2007-13.

The reinforcement of agricultural research and applications, together with the modernisation of the facilities for further training are basic tools for the life-long education of farmers, livestock breeders, poultry farmers and fishermen with a view to ensuring that they are in a position to respond to the calls of the times and to orient themselves in good time to the continuously increasing demands of the market.

AKEL will continue to deal with the rural economy within the broad spectrum of its social and economic contribution and importance and not only based on the cold figures of competitiveness and profitability.

AKEL will continue to support the farmer's movement of the island, with the Union of Cypriot Farmers (EKA) at its vanguard. In the current conditions, the activity of the farmer's movement is changing; however, its existence and struggles will always remain essential to the defence and expansion of the gains of farmers.

### 13. MIDDLE SOCIAL STRATA

The working people in this category face, today more than ever, the pressure and competition of big capital. Small enterprise owners, small shop and small trade business owners, bus owners and freelance professionals in the technical sector and other services, belong to this category. Because of their size and incomes, their economic and political interests coincide more with those of wage earners than with the interests of the big capital.

Since its foundation, our Party has embraced these social strata and has contributed significantly to their organization as professionals, providing full support and assistance to the promotion of their professional problems.

The course of events and the development of our economy during the last years have contributed to the development of the service sector at the expense of productive professions, which are continuously declining. The involvement of big capital in the new fields of activity of low and medium social strata creates a larger conflict of interest compared to previous times, resulting in a greater need to address collectively and in an organized manner the problems created by this conflict.

Taking advantage of our country's accession to the European Union and our harmonisation with the *acquis communautaire*, big capital has strived so that everything is regulated in such a manner to serve its own interests. Small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) are facing serious financial problems because of the intense and often unfair competition from large supermarkets and chain stores. The globalisation of the economy, our harmonisation with the *acquis*

*communautaire* and EU economic policy oblige firms to adapt, modernize and implement new methods that require substantial expenditure which in most cases exceed the financial capabilities of small businesses. Financial crises like the current one have negative effects on the small and vulnerable economy of Cyprus and foremost to all SMEs.

In the construction sector, professionals of various associations face severe reduction of their work. The same applies to groups of products and services that are less essential. The decline in tourism and consumption in general has created problems directly and indirectly in many enterprises.

Despite the efforts undertaken by the Government for access to easy financing and low interest rates, this has not been achieved because of the policies of the banks, which view profits as their priority.

In the area of fair competition and law application, SMEs constantly face pressure from supermarkets, hypermarkets and shopping malls. Big capital seeks to completely impose its own terms, conditions and rules in the retail trade.

Based on the above general findings, the following measures and proposals should be promoted:

1. The participation of the Organisation of SMEs as an equal agency in the Financial Advisory Committee,
2. Continuation of the policy for the protection of business premises and modernization of the legislation regarding rent,
3. The possibility of creating a guarantor organisation and financial support schemes for enterprises that have proven to suffer from the negative consequences of the economic crisis should be elaborated,
4. Regulation of the opening hours of shops and relations in the retail sector in a way that these are not at the expense of small businesses,
5. The enactment of the Law regulating the twelve categories of professions related to car and the technical control points is very important. It is imperative to promote the legal regulation of other professions as well.

The duty of the Party and the Peoples Movement with regards the middle social strata is:

1. To reaffirm the common and akin interests of the middle social strata with the working class and farmers,
2. To contribute, through the party members in these strata, to the further mass growth of its sectoral organizations, as well as in the study, classification and

prioritisation of its problems,

3. To project these problems to the relevant bodies within and outside the House of Representatives and fight together with the middle strata for the assertion of their just claims,
4. To guide and struggle together with these strata, so that the participation of our country in the EU and the completion of our harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* do not adversely affect their standard of living,
5. In formulating the overall policies and tactics of the Party also taking carefully into account their interests.

#### **14. YOUTH AND THE YOUTH MOVEMENT**

The young generation of Cyprus is living and is active in a social system that worships profit, imposes a fierce competitiveness, individualism and egoism: a system that "kills" social solidarity and is trying to transform young people into an egocentric, marginalised and spineless strata, detached from collective participation and action in social struggles and affairs. The social system, in combination with imperialism's subculture, is cultivating "false consciousnesses", fermenting illusions and often manages to succeed in promoting young people's social demobilization. The mass media are playing a pivotal role towards this end. The establishment is systematically cultivating the stand exhibited by a section of young people rejecting politics and political parties in an attempt to dampen the people and the youth movement.

Consequently, a section of the youth is outwardly expressing feelings of revulsion towards politics, parties and organised struggle. This worrying trend for our society is also dangerous for the Left because the feelings of revulsion, disenchantment and alienation from political struggle operate as a mechanism of self-defence, conservatism and the reproduction of the establishment.

For the Left to fulfil its goals and more particularly, for the construction of a human-centred society of justice, solidarity and equality, it requires active and not alienated people.

Despite all the pressure the young people are under in Cyprus, in general terms they maintain the characteristics of questioning, spontaneity and the inclination towards everything new and modern. The youth are a radical and progressive strata and a vehicle for social changes. The election results both of the 2008 presidential elections and the 2009 European elections, where AKEL registered percentages among the young generation of around 40%, - much greater than its overall percentage - is extremely hopeful. These results prove that the Cypriot youth maintains its progressive nature and supports the Left. At the same time, the high abstention rate registered in the European elections among the youth, but also within society in general, is a cause for special reflection.

We must note here that the level of politicisation and organisation of the young people of our country remains high and without question is much higher than other European countries and western countries. EDON continues to have a strong relationship, presence and intervention in young people. This relationship is based

on the historical ties the Left has forged with the young generation in the struggles for the defence of the independence, freedom and democracy in our country, for the defence and extension of the rights and gains of the young generation. The relation between the young generation and the Left is renewed and consolidated more through the contemporary struggles and assertions of young people.

In examining the contemporary socio-political framework, it is also important to record the big change on the political scene that has come about due to the election of Demetris Christofias to the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus. New horizons for the young generation have opened up. The social, institutional and political role of the young generation of the country and the institutions that express it has been upgraded.

The struggles of the Left, with EDON in the front line, to serve the interests of youth are continuing today in a more favourable environment created by the Christofias government. In just two years of the administration, a significant part of the government programme has already been implemented regarding the young people. We can point out some of the following that are distinguishable:

- Real big steps have been taken in the upgrading of the young generation's social role and its participation in decision-making centres that affect it. The institutionalised representation of the Youth Board of Cyprus, the Pancyprian Federation of Student Unions, Pancyprian Coordinating Committee of School Students and of the organised youth movement in various permanent ad hoc commissions in general has now been established and is a living reality.
- In the field of meritocracy, significant progress has also been registered through the noticeable reduction in the recourses against the decisions of the Public Service Commission and the Cyprus Educational Commission. Furthermore, this is being proved through the extension and deepening in an institutional way of objective honest procedures concerning the hiring of personnel, promotions, postings, transfers in the wider public sector, the preservation of the waiting list.
- Regarding the creative utilisation of free time in recent years, inter alia, significant projects have been made through the establishment and functioning of the Multi- purpose Youth Recreation Centres in Limassol and Pafos. In addition, Game centres and Information Centres are functioning in most cities.
- With regards to the tackling of the issue of juvenile delinquency, a broader effort is underway in the field of prevention and enlightenment, concerning education, the family and the creation of conditions for young people's healthy recreation. A Commission against violence in sports grounds has been set up. A Rapid Reaction Unit and Watch on violence have been established by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The institution of the Open Schools has been extended significantly, whilst the support services for detainees at the central prison are being upgraded.
- In the effort to combat the great problem of the use of addictive substances, the reorganisation of the Anti-Drugs Council is being promoted. The New 2009-2012 National Strategy against drugs has been elaborated. 31 million Euros have been earmarked for the introduction of new therapeutic programmes and targeted actions for prevention and other preventative measures.
- Concerning young workers, the difference in the philosophy of the government has been discernable through the sustainability of the Social Insurance Fund,

without any raising whatsoever of the retirement age. At the same time, the limit of the minimum wage has been raised substantially, which is now at 50% of the national average wage. The programme to boost young entrepreneurship, the special Scheme for Training Unemployed workers (a partnership between the semi-governmental organisations Human Resource Development Authority, Cyprus Productivity Centre (KEPA), Higher Hotel Institute (AXIK) and the Department of Labour), rapid programmes for the initial vocational training of the unemployed and newcomers to the labour market and the deployment and training of unemployed higher education graduates is being promoted and implemented. Furthermore, the government has swiftly elaborated and implemented a comprehensive housing policy that supports in practise young people and the possibility of acquiring a house.

- Regarding students and tertiary education in general, we distinguish the following: the intensification and implementation of the Educational Reform, the further extension of Public Free Education, the foundation of a Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cyprus and the Faculty of Scientific Restoration at the Cyprus University of Technology, the granting of 12 million Euros through the State Student Aid Package with regards assistance for students in Cyprus, abroad, public and private universities based on socio-economic criteria, the increase in the subsidy of the granted rent to displaced students by 5% and the approval of the amendment bill regarding the stricter control of the increase in the fees in Private Universities. Through an amendment submitted by AKEL it was decreed that the maximum fee increase will not be more than 1.5 times the annual inflation rate.

- Concerning school students and in general primary and secondary education, the reformulation of the new curriculum programmes, the approval of a large number of the proposals tabled by the Pancyprian Coordinating Committee of School Students (PSEM) regarding changes on school regulations and the introduction of the institution of four trimester sessions.

- With the election of the President of the Republic and the appointment of the new Administrative Council of the Cyprus Youth Board, the consultative role of the organisation and the elaboration of policies through it have been upgraded.

In evaluating the implementation of the government programme on young people, whilst we register our positive assessment on the progress that has been achieved, it is evident that a lot still needs to be done. As a Party, in cooperation with EDON, we shall continue to exercise our influence, with determination for the implementation of the government programme at an even quicker pace. Towards this end, we shall continue to support the just demands projected by the mass youth movement and its organisations. The continuation and further intensification of the assertive action of EDON and the Party for the defence and extension of young people's rights is imperative.

It is through this assertive action that the young people realises that better living conditions are not ensured by the system, but are gained through relentless fierce class struggle. It is precisely this action that is creating the preconditions to win hearts and minds and helps towards the realisation of the need for organised struggle.

At the same time, it constitutes the spearhead in the effort to win the hearts and minds of the young people, the constant and militant defence of the positions of principle on the Cyprus problem, as well as the vanguard role of AKEL and EDON in

the promotion of the policy of rapprochement between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots vindicated by life itself, against nationalism-chauvinism and the imperialist machinations against Cyprus.

Given the close and unshakable ties of AKEL and EDON and the position that there is a dialectic relationship in the path and successes of EDON with the struggle and successes of AKEL - a relationship that forms to a great extent the future of the Party too - the need to discuss ways of even closer contacts, better coordination and cooperation between AKEL and EDON is imperative, with the fundamental goal being the further support and strengthening of EDON. At the same time, we must intensify our efforts as AKEL-EDON to ensure a more systematic and methodical way in connecting, transferring and assimilating young working people in the LOP's.

Special emphasis must be attached to the upgrading of the role and involvement of EDON Local Organisations in the development of political, ideological, trade union and cultural activity. The content of this activity must correspond to the contemporary needs and demands of youth. We must especially reflect on the content in the activity of the Local Clubs and EDON's intervention within them, as well as the elaboration of special youth areas in which EDON can further develop its activity and embrace young people.

## **15. Women and the Women's Movement**

In the 84 years of its existence, AKEL has the struggle of women for emancipation and equality high in its priorities.

We recognize that despite the progress that has been made during the last decades, concerning the position of women - in Cyprus and abroad - equality between men and women remains a vision and not a reality. Unemployment, wage inequality, part-time precarious employment and poverty affect women more than men. All the above, cause other types of inequality, such as the underrepresentation of women in various decision-making centres, whilst at the same time, phenomena such as violence within the family, sexual harassment and the commercialization of the human status by the mass media are increasing, which as a rule mainly concern women.

We reject the various bourgeois ruling ideologies that also flourish within the European Union which reduce the issue to that of a contest between the two sexes, as an issue of sexist prejudices or as a result of the reduced participation of women in decision-making centres. In our view, the women's issue originates in the depths of human history when class exploitation emerged, upon which for thousands of years, the various forms of economic, social and political oppression of women were built. Real equality between the two sexes cannot exist in the capitalist system, which is based on inequality, injustice, oppression and commercialization of everything. Gender equality is a component part of the qualitative advanced society we are envisaging: socialism

Gender equality does not mean ignoring the biological differences that exist between the two sexes and the particular physical position that the woman has in the reproduction cycle. On the contrary, it means that new policies must be elaborated that will relieve women from their multiple roles that they are called to achieve, but also policies that establish maternity and the bringing up of children as a social affair.

Women's inequality primarily and above all concerns women of the working class and of the working people in general who are subject to double exploitation - class and gender -and the consequences of the anti-worker policies. AKEL's position that has been proved right by international and Cypriot experience is that the assertions of the women's movement bring results when they are tied to the struggles of the class-based trade union movement and the Left. AKEL, POGO and PEO have contributed to All the gains of Cypriot women at work, political rights, social policies, family rights and generally in all the sectors have the mark of AKEL, POGO and PEO.

The organized struggle of women is the only one that can bear fruit, and the only way to break down prejudices against women.

We positively appreciate the steps implemented by the present government of Demetris Christofias concerning the support of women and the combating of negative phenomena, such as violence within family, trafficking of women or the exploitation of women immigrants.

The Party will intensify its activity for woman's rights and gender equality. Our basic axes for the coming period are the following:

- Care for the full implementation of the government programme on women's issues;
- Continuous elaboration of Party policies regarding working women, mothers, women farmers, immigrant women, one-parent families;
- Raising issues concerning women through the parliamentary activity of AKEL-Left-New Forces;
- All round Party support towards the Women's Movement of POGO on a central, provincial and local level;
- Targeted work for the integration of more women in the Party and party work;
- Incorporation of women's issues in the educational work of the Party and of the other organizations of the Peoples Movement of the Left.

The scientific class perception of the women's issue, the education of the members and cadres of AKEL, women and men, with the ideals of the equality of the sexes and the elevation and promotion for the solution of all the daily problems Cypriot women face, is an indispensable precondition for the achievement of the Party's goals on the woman's issue. AKEL, together with the women's movement of POGO, will continue the struggle for a society where women will have the position they deserve.

## **16. REFUGEES MOVEMENT AND REFUGEE PROBLEMS**

AKEL justifiably is proud of its struggles concerning for the solution of the problems of refugees.

For 36 years, we are in the front line of the struggle together with the refugee movement for the improvement in their living conditions.

AKEL believed and still believes that elections should be held for the election of the leadership of the refugee movement. Unfortunately, various petty-party expedencies in the past aimed at the inactivation of the organized refugee movement and of the Pancyprian Committee of Refugees (PEP), which played a

vanguard role at difficult and troublesome times for the solution of refugee problems.

With the election of Demetris Christofias to the Presidency of the Republic, a comprehensive refugee policy is being implemented which aims at improving the housing problem of refugees and particularly of young couples.

More specifically:

- Financial assistance for the purchase of a privately owned house/flat has increased. This assistance varies from € 37,600 - € 51,260 and €68,350 respectively for families who are entitled whether having children or not. This increase varies from 124% - 200%, that is to say that the economic subsidies grants for the entitled refugees have more than doubled and trebled.
- The income criteria for those eligible for housing in government housing estates and for self-housing on government plots have been reassessed (30-33%) in order to accommodate and cover a bigger number of eligible couples. At the same time, assistance given by the government for self-housing purposes on privately owned or government plots have increased (45%).
- For the first time after 1994 (overturning the decision of the DISI party government), new refugee settlements are being built to cover the needs of refugees from low-income strata. 760 new housing units will be built. The first housing units are already being built. They will be completed by the end of the five-year term of this government's term in office.
- After many years, hundreds of new government self-housing plots have been divided and allocated with the immediate right to mortgage for obtaining loans.
- During the last two years, around 12,500 title deeds have been issued and it is expected that by the end of 2010, all the entitled refugees that live in government estates and in self-housing estates will acquire title deeds.
- For those whose house is built on Turkish Cypriot land, after the decision taken by the Christofias government, a certification for leasing will be granted so that the right of transfer of the property to their children and allowing them to raise loans by mortgaging this property is safeguarded. The first certificates have already been granted and it is expected the intensive effort will begin to grant certificates to all those who are entitled.
- The government is also proceeding to grant 5000 plots as compensation to the entitled refugees who are living in Turkish Cypriot houses. Already, the first plots are being divided for this purpose.
- The financial assistance that is granted for repairs and conservation of self-housing built on government plots has been increased from €8,543 to € 10,250 and the number of those who are entitled has been expanded.

- The reconstruction and general repairing of the refugee housing estates, which were built in the first years of displacement, is continuing.
- The effort to qualitatively improve the living conditions of the refugees is being successfully continued by creating parks, green areas and parking, the installation of lifts and other similar works.
- Despite the fact that we note with satisfaction the work that has been done, we do not claim that there are no problems. It is for this reason that the Party will continue to fight with the refugees until the day of return and to assert their just demands and for the solution of the Cyprus problem.

Amongst our priorities will be:

- Readjustment of the amounts of rent allowance so that they are in line with the current situation;
- Compliance with the time framework for the implementation of the declarations of the government programme for refugees;
- Improvement of the existing and the creation of new projects for social welfare infrastructure that will help to "de-ghetto" the refugee settlements, such as for example through the establishment of youth clubs, youth sport centres and places where elderly people can pass their time;
- Modernization and coordination of various government services, but also of local authorities for providing better service to refugees, especially those living in the refugee settlements;
- The speeding up of the division of new government plots for self-housing and hastening of the infrastructure construction works so that it will be possible for entitled refugees to use them as soon as possible;
- Implementation of measures for the fairer treatment of the refugees that have built their own houses on plots belonging to them or who purchased a readymade house or apartment.
- We appreciate with satisfaction the significant increase of the amounts that are given through the Central Equal Distribution Agency of the refugee compensation entitlement. We will continue the effort to strengthen the credit rating and solvency of the refugee community. We support the development of new schemes through the Agency that will be the result of an imperative study made by specialists.

The issue of the classification the descendants on the mother's side as refugees still concerns the refugee community. AKEL recognizes the just cause of the demand of these people as an issue regarding the abolition of the existing discrimination. However, AKEL points out that all the previous governments in times of much more favourable economic conditions have shown reluctance and weakness in resolving this problem. Nowadays political parties or leading party officials who were in government for years and did not show any interest in solving the problem, are now using demagogic rhetoric to gain the votes of refugees in view of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. In recognising the just cause of

the demand, we cannot be indifferent about the extra financial cost in the midst of the economic crisis, nor can we bypass the political and demographic extensions of the issue. As AKEL, we cannot also ignore the evident unconstitutional essence of the legislations that the provisional majority of the House of Representatives have promoted. For those reasons, AKEL abstained during the vote on the relevant proposed bill and adheres to its position that the dialogue with the executive power should continue and that all aspects of the problem should be thoroughly discussed and solutions should be found nearing in mind the current economic situation.

## **17. ENCLAVED-MISSING PERSONS -WAR STRICKEN PEOPLE**

### **Enclaved people in the occupied areas**

The few remaining enclaved persons, in the majority elderly people, continue patiently their struggle until the day of solution and reunification.

We honor the enclaved people who through their fighting spirit, patience and strength remained rooted in the motherland and keep the hope alive.

Our concern is the permanent safeguarding of the rights of the enclaved in the residence, ownership and management of their property by themselves and their children-heirs, regardless of their place of residence, to free movement, education, health care, the exercise of their religious duties and in general the right to life in conditions of safety.

The day-to-day problems faced by the enclaved have decreased significantly due to the sensitivity demonstrated by the government of D. Christofias.

The government proceeded and from 1 July 2008 granted a full allowance to all the enclaved regardless of whether they receive a pension or any other allowance. The process of repairing the dwellings of the enclaved people continues and is expected to be completed soon. The government of D. Christofias, with two recent decisions, continues its effort to improve the living conditions of the enclaved. The first decision concerns the granting of financial assistance to the enclaved for the particular difficulties they face in the course of their employment in agriculture. The second decision concerns the financial support to the enclaved for investments in agriculture and livestock farming which covers 50% of their investment.

AKEL will continue to support in every way the enclaved and will continue to draw strength from their struggle.

### **Missing persons**

The issues of missing persons are the most important of the humanitarian problems caused by the war and occupation, and that is why we always consider them our highest priority.

AKEL strongly supports the struggle of the relatives of missing persons for finding the truth about the fate of each and every one of them.

We are speeding up procedures through the Missing Persons Investigation Committee especially in the areas of detection of burial sites and exhumation of

the graves and identification of the remains. To achieve this goal the Missing Persons Investigation Committee must be staffed further with adequate technical and scientific workforce.

At the same time, we should enhance the services of the Anthropology Centre as well as the Institute of genetics.

The erection of the monument for the missing should be promoted.

In addition to the above, we shall continue working to ensure that Turkey is compelled to open up the archives of the Turkish army and other services and allow exhumations in areas described as military zones so that all necessary information can help the verification of the fate of the missing persons.

The allowances and other benefits to the relatives of the missing persons should continue and be developed in the context of an upgraded social state.

### **War Stricken People**

The state has an obligation to support, in various ways, the people who have been adversely affected from the struggles for democracy and freedom of Cyprus, as well as their families. On the basis of this philosophy:

1. We will promote the introduction of legislative and other frameworks to regulate the provision of assistance for the professional rehabilitation of war stricken people.
2. The financial support to the people who have suffered will continue, by analogy with the benefits to other categories of citizens, and on the basis of the framework that is already in place. With this framework, the people who have suffered should benefit from aid and support in matters of education up until university level.
3. We should provide health care and home care, where this is necessary, to the families of missing persons and those who died in the war, as well as the disabled and their families.
4. We should continue to honor the resistance fighters and support them in the various problems they face.
5. We will work for the implementation of the decision to erect a monument for the heroes of the democratic resistance, as well as a monument for those who died in all the struggles of the Cypriot people.
6. We will promote the demand for an award of honorary distinction to war stricken people, as the relative legislation stipulates.

## **18. COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT**

The Cooperative Movement has completed 100 years of existence and contribution to Cyprus. The emergence and operation of the Cooperative Movement has been inextricably linked to the rural and regional development, with the strengthening and assistance provided to small and medium-income strata of the city and the countryside.

The Cooperative Movement of Cyprus in the 100 years of its existence has responded worthily to its mission and fulfilled the task that it was called to perform in the difficult years of poverty and illiteracy. It helped ordinary people - farmers and workers - to overcome problems and difficulties, eradicated the usury rules, supported business activity and contributed to the progress and development of Cypriot society. It is no accident that the Cooperative Movement held and still holds a strong position in the Cypriot financial and economic system, which allows it to have an overall influence on the credit policy of the state.

AKEL has always been a firm supporter of the Cooperative Movement and thousands of its cadres have served it with faith, dedication and impartiality, even if from time to time discrimination against the Left also appeared in the Cooperative movement.

With the accession of Cyprus to the EU and the changes in the banking sector, the Cooperative Movement proceeded, mainly in the credit field, with radical innovations and modernization, in order to comply with the *acquis communautaire*, but above all maintaining its social and humane character.

AKEL believes that the Cooperative Movement has responded properly to the various challenges through time and proceeded with changes that enable it to continue its contribution and activity further strengthening its position in the Cypriot economy. In this effort, AKEL has always been supportive to the people of the Cooperative Movement in the hard work they had to perform.

The movement of the Left will continue:

- a) To defend the cooperative values
- b) To contribute to the expansion of cooperative ideas
- c) To promote its social and human centered character
- d) To support in a variety of ways all the current efforts for, amongst others, the continuous:
  - Increase of accountability and responsibility in matters of administration
  - Compliance with the principles of sound administration
  - Proactive audit
  - Upgrading of the Audit service to increase productivity and reduce the cost of services rendered
  - Improvement of coordination, information and control with regard to interest rates between the Cooperative Savings Societies-CSS
  - Strengthening of the Department of Supervision and Cooperative Development Companies on liquidity and management control issues of the CSS

AKEL insists on respecting the institutional framework for the supervision of Cooperative Credit institutions, as it is expressed in the Common Position, which the EU agreed upon, within the context of the harmonization of the Cooperative Movement with the *acquis communautaire*.

The Left pays special attention and interest to the non-credit sector of the Cooperative Movement as well, which must be upgraded continuously in order to be able to increase its share in the domestic market, always in the interest of the consumer.

Looking at the 100 years of the Cooperative Movement's course, AKEL expresses its confidence that the Movement will continue its uphill path, strengthening the special links it has with the hundreds of thousands of its members that are based on trust, understanding, respect, honesty, solidarity and humanity.

### **19. Peace and Solidarity Movement**

The struggle for peace is the most basic and pressing duty of our epoch. The struggle for peace cannot be detached from the struggle against the biggest enemy of peace, imperialism, which gives rise to and reproduces unjust, adventurous and criminal wars, triggering conflicts, provoking national and international clashes and conflicts. As a result of imperialist policies implemented by states, union of states, international organizations and multinational monopolies, poverty, exploitation, inequalities and democratic deficits are accelerating, whilst an unprecedented wave of unemployment has developed all over the world which is leading to the creation of acute social problems. All these problems undermine the foundations of stability and security throughout the whole world.

The unrelenting barbarity and the tactics of war, which the American inspired "New World Order" is based on, must be resisted through mass and militant struggle in order to save human existence and civilization. The struggles of the peoples were always the most effective weapon against war. Today, when imperialism appears invincible, the struggles of the peoples are a necessity, constituting the only answer and opposing pole against it.

The international anti-war movement is increasingly assuming a more anti-imperialist character and is today growing day by day. These can be observed through the uprisings all over the world against the war campaigns waged by the USA, NATO and even sometimes with the support of the European Union too, but also by the very successful anti-imperialist forums the World Peace Council, World Federation of Democratic Youth and others are organizing.

The international peaceful movement, now more mature, bigger and organized, is not only promoting effectively issues relating to peace and solidarity with struggling peoples, but is also the question of poverty, exploitation, equality, ecology, democratic deficit and the falsification of History. All these, set the struggle for peace on solid foundations, strengthen the ranks of the peace movement and contribute to the struggle of the Left for a qualitative better world.

The World Peace Council is once again leading the struggle for peace and solidarity, which the last 5 years continued its reorganization and restructuring, significantly recovering its lost prestige. It has grown in numbers, become more effective and is reaching out to broader masses in society. New national Councils and Committees have joined its ranks. It has forged alliances and is now developing significant and notable actions on a global level.

The peace movement should be dynamic, broad-based and polyphonic. The Left supports and participates in it, contributing to its better organization, correct orientation of its goals and in the content of its activity. AKEL fulfils this duty in practice by being in the front line of the struggle for peace and anti-imperialist solidarity. The anti-imperialist, anti-war aspect of AKEL's activity stems from its ideology, character and represents a fundamental part of its general policy.

AKEL participates and supports the activity of the Pancyprian Peace Council (PSE), with whom it has developed strong relations of solidarity that were forged in the common struggles and mobilizations over many years for peace in Cyprus and the world for; nuclear and general disarmament; the abolition of the foreign military bases and full demilitarization of our island and for the development of solidarity with the struggles of people for freedom, national independence and social progress.

AKEL supports the Pancyprian Peace Council in the great efforts it has made during the past five-year term for its reorganization and upgrading, so that it shall become more broader, stronger in numbers, effective with a notable multifaceted national and international activity. The Party shares the basic parameters of the struggle PSE is waging; anti-imperialist struggle, the struggle for youth and people not only to love peace, but to also learn to fight for it, the struggle against war for a peaceful and just solution of international and national problems and the struggle for complete nuclear disarmament. For AKEL is also clear that the defense of world peace and the prevalence of justice passes through the consistent and decisive support and defense of the principles of the International Law and the international organizations which service it, and above all the UN.

Today, when many peoples are under attack, the expression of solidarity with these peoples is imperative, as our own people also is in need of solidarity for our own struggles. Solidarity must be conveyed and assume a practical character, not only in the cases of imperialist aggressions and violation of human rights, but also even in the cases of natural catastrophes.

In order to forge the better coordination in the field of solidarity, the Solidarity Committee (EP.AL) is active and developing its activity within the framework of the Peoples Movement with the participation of AKEL, PEO, EDON, EKA and POGO. Throughout the 37 years of its existence and activity, EP.AL has been on many occasions the agency for solidarity with the struggling people of Africa, Asia, Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Iraq and others. Nevertheless, there is always more scope for improving the functioning of EP.AL, it's more prompt and timely response on issues life, and international developments bring to the fore.

The existence of EP.AL does not impede our participation in broader solidarity initiatives, as long as these are in line with the principles of the Peoples Movement and respect its entity.

## **20. LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT**

AKEL was always in the front line of the struggle for the democratization and modernization of Local self-government. The reform of the institutional framework of Local self-government is today, more than ever, a necessity.

AKEL with satisfaction notes that the government of Demetris Christofias is promoting the substantive reform of Local self-government, since our goal was and is to serve all citizens, irrespective of their place of residence through reliable and sustainable local authority organizations.

The development of the Local self-government institution for us is an essential element for the democratic functioning of the state and society. This is because as an institution it is inherently progressive in nature and broadens the prospects for decentralization of power and strengthens popular participation. Local self-government is an arena of struggle and assertion for the enhancement of local communities and peoples quality of life. In a modern state with a human-centred character, the role of Local self-government in the Administrative System is

upgraded. Local Authorities play a decisive role in the progressive development of local communities.

AKEL is seeking substantial changes to the institutional framework of Local self-government. This objective does not end with the mere transfer of duties and resources from the Central to the Local power that indeed must be promoted, but aims at a broader distribution of political and economic power. Besides, Local authorities are called upon today to assume new roles (political, social, developmental and cultural) in order to contribute to the general progress of society.

The changes that are being promoted by the government through the study for the reorganization of Local self-government are on the correct path and respond to the contemporary challenges and demands regarding the role it must play in today's conditions.

AKEL is continuing its struggle for:

- The modernization and upgrading of Local self-government and the enforcement of its autonomy,
- The safeguarding and entrenchment of its economic autonomy as a precondition for the development of infrastructure and developmental programmes based on local demands and criteria,
- The broadening of the participation of local citizens in the local administration and development procedures, which constitutes a precondition for the promotion of democratic decentralization. We welcome the new procedure implemented by the Christofias government for the elaboration of local plans and the substantial opportunity handed to local authorities and citizens to express their views and contribute to the development of more humane cities. The quality of life of local citizens should be the main goal of development. At the same time, we support with consistency and encourage every effort for urban planning reorganization, the protection and development of the environment and modern and human friendly cities.
- We are also aiming at upgrading and substantially enhancing the production of cultural work in Local authorities by promoting local cultural activity and creation, hence contributing in an essential way to the general projection of our culture and the combating of sub-culture.
- We want Local self-government to promote the "Popular and mass sports" with programs that can involve all ages, from the children to the elderly. The successful "Sports for All" institution can be an example for the fulfillment of the previously mentioned goals.
- Social welfare within the framework of Local self-government was, and remains, a priority for AKEL because it serves and assists the weaker strata of the people. We consider that now better preconditions are being to strengthen our contribution in such a way as to continue on the one hand the significant work being carried out and on the other to elaborate new policies and programmes for our fellow citizens most in need.

We underline the notable activity the representatives of AKEL are developing daily in Local self-government that is focusing on people and the upgrading of the quality of life in local communities. We are struggling so that that our contribution

is upgraded, in quantity and quality, reaffirming on a day-to-day basis the militant character and human-centred approach of our Party.

## 21. EDUCATION AND THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

AKEL for years has been stressing the need for a radical educational reform that would promote radical changes in both the structure and the content of education. The necessity for a radical educational reform is a result of the long-standing problems of our educational system and mainly from the dangerous deadlocks that our education system had accumulated during the administration of the DHSY party.

Throughout the government of Tassos Papadopoulos, we supported and worked initially for the publication of the Committee for the Educational Reform of the seven university lecturers, whose principles and goals we had expressed our agreement. Subsequently, we worked for the implementation of the proposed measures, the overwhelming majority of which we also accepted.

Through our own decisive contribution and support, most of these measures and policies were either implemented or promoted. From there on, many things still needed to be done for the fulfilment of the goals that had initially been set for the Education Reform. The main points of the Reform were the content of education and teaching methods which had not been modernized to a satisfactory degree and the training, assessment and appointee system that were not renewed.

This was the general situation concerning public education in Cyprus in 2008 when the government of Demetris Christofias was elected, seeking the implementation of the most progressive and people - friendly Government Programme: a Programme that set Education and Culture very high on its priorities.

The basic cornerstone of the Programme is the continuation and completion of the Educational Reform; a Reform that will confront conservatism, anachronism and backwardness, bringing new concepts and change; a Reform that will lead to the upgrading of the quality of the education system and public school. To achieve that the Demetris Christofias government has already taken great steps in the first two years of administration. The following are the most important measures that have been taken for the upgrading of Education within the framework of the Education Reform:

- The 2009 and 2010 budgets, which were drawn up by the Demetris Christofias government, clearly reflect the importance the Government attaches to education and culture. In a period characterised by the biggest international economic crisis for many decades, the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture increased significantly by 12.5% for 2009 and 3.5% for 2010.
- The enormous effort to modernise the content of education has been completed, through the elaboration of new curriculums and timetable programmes and the introduction of new teaching methods from the Nursery to Lyceum with the participation of over 50 university lecturers and 300 active teachers. The elaboration of new curricula and timetable programmes from the pre-primary school to the Upper Secondary Lyceum represents the foundation the entire effort for Educational Reform is based on.

- The pledge to reduce the number of school students from 30 to 25 in all classes had been fulfilled, through the reduction of their number per class to 25 in an additional 6 classes (pre-Primary school, 4th, 5th, 6th year Primary school and 2nd ,3rd year Secondary School)
- During the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school year, a subsidy was granted to all second year Secondary Schools pupils for the purchase of a laptop.
- The pledge made by the government for extending the state student welfare has also been fulfilled through the approval of a package of targeted support measures to students and families facing severe socio-economic problems amounting to 12 million Euros. More specifically, the funds of the State Scholarship Foundation have been increased in order to provide more scholarships to students abroad; credits have been granted to public and private higher and tertiary institutions to cover the housing needs of undergraduate students; the allocation of food coupons and coupons for the purchasing of academic books and the subsidy of new students for the purchase or/and updating of a laptop.
- The custom of the school bus has been applied, aiming at gradually covering all Primary and Secondary Schools.
- The pioneering objective for the “Cultivation of a culture of peaceful cohabitation, mutual respect and cooperation between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, aiming at the liberation from the occupation and the reunification of our country and people ” for the school years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 is being promoted.
- A comprehensive proposal for the implementation of a new system to assess educational work and teachers, which is the subject of an ongoing dialogue, has been prepared.
- The Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation has been founded, whose aim is to carry out educational research and conduct constant scientific evaluation of the entire educational system.
- The predicted funds for the upgrading of the material and technical infrastructure of schools have increased significantly, in comparison to previous years, from 68.3 million Euros in 2008 to 75 million Euros in 2009 and to 88 million Euros for 2010. At the same time, additional credits of 20 million Euros have been granted to the Ministry of Education and Culture for building infrastructure works within the framework of the measures adopted by the Government to tackle the economic crisis.
- A new framework is being implemented for the functioning of the Unified All - Day School.
- Playgrounds at public nurseries and the equipment of schools and units for children with special needs have been upgraded.
- The implementation of the introductive education program of teachers has begun with the training of mentors and new teachers.
- The number of optional all- day nurseries has been doubled.

- Every school is now connected to the Internet and the Web - School (DIA.S.) pilot programme has started.
- The custom of the Zones of Educational Priority has been expanded and new additional measures have been taken to support them.
- A Medicine Faculty at the University of Cyprus and the Department of Restoration Sciences at the Cyprus University of Technology have been founded.
- The Council of Ministers has approved and submitted a bill in Parliament for the control of the fees of Private Universities.
- A comprehensive policy has been elaborated for the first time regarding the integration of English-speaking pupils in our education system, with the organisation of departments for intensive learning of the Greek language, the publication of an introductory guidebook in several foreign languages and the training of teachers.

Specific actions have been taken for the democratization of our Education:

- The issue of the access of teachers to their personal records has been settled.
- The anonymous letters accusing individuals are now destroyed by the employee or official that receives them.
- The following article restricting the free expression of teachers in the Public Educational Service Law has been deleted: "Educational functionaries cannot publish or convey from television, radio or any other means any material which refers to the carrying out of their duties without securing the prior permission of the responsible authority".
- District Counselling and Career Advice Bureaus are operating for the first time and a European and International Affairs Department has been established as a part of the restructuring of the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- A comprehensive scheme to tackle anti-social behaviour at school, based on proposals of a scientific committee, is being implemented. Within this framework of the implementation of the scheme, the institution of the Head of Department in the 1st grade of Gymnasium has been expanded, the number of the Educational Psychologists has increased by 30%, the institution of the School Social Worker is being implemented for the first time, the institution of the Open School has been expanded from 4 to 10 Municipalities and a Rapid Intervention Unit and an Observatory on violence has been formed by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

## Goals

AKEL considers that the government program on Education should continue to be promoted resolutely and at an even faster rate. At the same time, however the changes should always be introduced with appropriate planning and corresponding preparation through dialogue with all the involved parties so that mistakes of the past can be avoided.

The goal that has been set for the continuation of the Educational Reform is quite ambitious which AKEL must struggle for on all fronts to fulfil.

These aims are:

### **Education Reform**

- The transformation of the Cypriot school should not be into a school serving the market economy but a democratic school serving the community, a democratic school of the citizen.
- The formation of a democratic school where all children will study together, irrespective of any peculiarity (such as for example, any kind of disability, different mother language etc) and in which no child will be excluded from acquiring all the knowledge, skills and ability which nowadays characterize an educated person.
- The development of a humane school, in which pupils have the possibility of living their childhood and adolescence as the most creative and happy periods of their life - something that is not the case today.
- Public Education should be viewed as a social and public right, which must be ensured through the provision of public, high quality and free education at all levels of the educational system.
- The eradication of narrow-minded ethno-centric, mono-cultural and consequently nationalist elements.
- The reorganization of the administrative structures of the educational system, aiming at reducing centralization and bureaucracy, something that obstructs every effort for modernization.
- The decentralization of duties and responsibilities to districts and school units.
- The creation of public post-upper secondary Vocational Education and Training Institutes
- The contemporary history of Cyprus to be taught comprehensively and objectively.

### **Appointment, Training, Assessment of the Teachers**

- Modernization and improvement of the list of new teachers to be appointed in public education, without changing its basic philosophy.
- Planning and introduction of specialised training programmes, which will cover the needs of the educational system, school units and teachers.
- The immediate implementation of the new assessment system, with which the one-dimensional model of inspection will be abolished.

### **Primary - Secondary Education**

- The expansion of public, free and compulsory pre-primary education by one year so that it would cover the children 3 years and 8 months old until the age of 4 years and 8 months.
- The expansion of public, free and compulsory education from 10 to 12 years and the creation of a new unity 12-year compulsory education.
- The well-prepared and structured introduction of new curricula and timetable programmes, including the proper preparation of all involved parties and especially teachers surrounding the changes to be carried out.
- The introduction of new teaching methods that will cultivate critical thinking, humanitarian values, democratic attitudes and virtues.
- The continual improvement and expansion of the institution of the unified all-day school.
- The gradual unification of the Secondary, Technical, and Vocational Education into a new form of Upper Secondary Lyceum that will combine organically general and technical vocational education.
- The expansion of the Zones of Educational Priority.
- The upgrading of the education of children with special needs.

### **Higher Education**

- The further development of public higher education, so that Cyprus attains its self-reliance on academic programs of graduates so that every young person who wants to can study in his/her country.
- The creation of new undergraduate programmes that will cover the new faculties, for example Medicine, Fine Arts and Law.
- Safeguarding that the private universities will serve their public mission with responsibility and provide qualitative academic programs. Towards this end, our steadfast goal is to transform the Private Universities into not-profit institutions.
- For AKEL, the all round progressive reform of the education system, based on our vision for the formation of a public, human-centred, modern and democratic education, which will provide equal opportunities of access and success for all young people at all levels of the education system, symbolizes the necessary preconditions for the modernisation of society, the upgrading of quality of life, the combating of educational-social exclusion and the alleviation of the social and educational inequalities.

## **22. CULTURE**

Today, in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Cypriot society is in need of cultural values and principles that will inspire and offer a new perspective to the people, instilling everyone with self-confidence in the struggle for the formation of a free and creative society where universal values and principles will prevail and where dignity and pride will be forged.

For the past 36 years, the Turkish occupation has been depriving the Cypriot people of the potential of a unified and multifaceted development of its cultural forces. On the other hand, the attempt to impose cultural sub-products that exalt individualism, easy profit, personal interest, gossip and vulgarity are gradually eroding Cypriot society.

We note with satisfaction that that the Government of Demetris Christofias is already fulfilling important provisions of the government's election program in the area of culture. These provisions are also proposals that have been put forward by AKEL. More specifically, the creation of a Unified Cultural Authority is under way and so is the construction of a State Theatre, which is expected to be ready by 2011. A State Drama School and a Theatre Museum are also being created.

In order to enhance even further the spiritual and cultural creation but also culture in general we propose:

- The construction of a modern Archaeological Museum, State Gallery and of a State Library,
- The creation of a Cultural Park in the capital that will include an outdoor exhibition area, amphitheatre and permanent modern art sculpture exhibition,
- The elaboration of a program for the creation of smaller infrastructure works in urban centres and the periphery,
- The creation of a State Dance Academy and a State Ballet for Classic and Modern Dance,
- The creation of cultural centres in important capital cities of Europe and in the United States,
- The creation of a "Cultural Service Bank" that will support Amateur Cultural Organisations,
- The subsidization of the holiday expenses for pensioner cultural artists in a precarious economic condition,
- The provision of financial support by the state to a number of artists wishing to undertake further education and training abroad,
- The institutionalization of a School Pupils Art Festival,
- The upgrading of the content of educational books. Particular emphasis should be placed on the objective study of the intellectual and artistic creations of other peoples,
- The institutionalization of special awards for school pupils and students with exceptional performances in culture and arts,
- The creation of small Historical and Cultural Museums of Cyprus in the Cypriot Communities abroad,

- The publication of special book editions with cultural content (Literature, poetry etc) that will serve the needs of the young generation of the Cypriot communities abroad,
- The organisation of educational trips for young people from the Cypriot communities abroad to Cyprus,
- The creation of theatre groups with the participation of local municipality councils should be examined,
- The establishment of joint cultural programs of Greek and Turkish Cypriots that will include the organization of music, dance and cinema Festivals, exhibitions, theatre plays, symposia, seminars etc,
- Works of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots poets and novelists should be translated from Greek to Turkish and vice-versa. This will allow the broader public of our country to get to know and appreciate these works,
- The cooperation of G/Cs and T/Cs should include the joint production of compact discs, films and TV series, theatre plays and others,
- The creation of cinema films by Cypriot creators should be substantially encouraged,
- We also note that in Cyprus there are many exceptionally talented students of a young age in all aspects of cultural creation. We suggest the establishment of an Arts school, where younger creators, along with their school obligations will attend supplementary arts classes. This way the talent of these young people will not go wasted,
- It is indispensable for Cyprus to participate in European Union (EU) programs, but also seek to develop cooperation with one or more EU countries for the joint organisation of cultural activities.

All these measures should be carefully planned and organised so they can be gradually implemented. The aforementioned recommendations aim at establishing Cyprus as a hub of Civilization of Europe in the East Mediterranean and Middle East region.

### **23. Health**

Modern societies must perceive Health in line with the fundamental principle defining it as a social good that a state is obliged to provide to its citizens. Health care institutions do not produce commodities for consumption but provide invaluable services and carry out a social task. For our Party, AKEL, the provision of quality health care is a basic human right and not a privilege of the very few.

The performance of the health care sector is not based on the utilization of unlimited financial resources. It requires to the maximum extent possible carefully designed and rational use of resources, through scientific approaches and optimal strategic planning.

The state should carefully address all the existing gaps in the Health Sector and control the intrusion of socially uncontrolled, profit-making capital in the area of health care.

The health care sector in Cyprus faces major problems. The existing health care system is anachronistic with many weaknesses. There are inequalities in the access to public health care services, shortages and deficiencies. The public health care sector due to various problems is facing the threat of decline. At the same time, a strategic plan for the development of the private Health care sector is absent. The formation and adoption of specific roles for the private and the public health care sectors aiming at their parallel development is also missing.

Continuous assessments and the implementation of reforms for the upgrading of the Health Care services are required, through better management of human resources, equal distribution and universal access.

As part of the measures for the implementation of the Government programme in the health care sector, a National Strategy against cancer has been adopted, the creation of a Medical School at the University of Cyprus has been announced, new wards have been operating at the Nicosia General Hospital, the Haemodialysis Unit has been expanded, whilst the creation of a State transplant centre is being promoted.

In order to tackle the multiple problems faced in the Health Care sector, the implementation of the General Health Plan must begin and should be completed the soonest possible. The public sector should become the cornerstone of the General Health plan. Through the necessary improvements and constant revitalization it should become the model and reference point of the Health Care sector in Cyprus, coupled with parallel and balanced development of the private sector organized on the basis of rational and modern scientific requirements.

The Health Care System must:

- Provide all citizens with equal access opportunities to the Health Care services.
- Provide equal opportunities of quality health care to all citizens, irrespective of their socio-economic situation and place of residence.
- Ensure the right of all patients to be treated by the doctor and in hospital of their choice.
- Be efficient.
- Fully utilize the already existing working force and limit the waste of resources.
- Be sustainable and set up mechanisms to monitor its functioning.

For AKEL, the modernization, re-organisation and autonomy of public health care organizations constitute a decisive step and a means of preparing hospitals for the Health Plan to be put into practice.

## 24. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES

We live in a social reality in which money is projected as the supreme value and its acquisition by any fair or unfair means is viewed as the ultimate goal. Today social reality is characterised by a crisis of values and institutions, by phenomena of corruption in which social relations are dominated by harsh and relentless competition. Such a situation favours the spread and use of addictive substances. On the other hand, within the framework of the international distribution of labour, the wretchedness of entire countries has transformed them into sites for the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs. The vast profits from the trafficking of such substances have led to the creation of entire illegal networks that have reached as far as our country too.

The spread and use of drugs does not only concern some marginalised groups but has taken on broader social dimensions.

The strengthening of our own social intervention, the efforts to improve social conditions and make them healthier, are part of our overall struggle against trafficking and use of illegal drugs.

We appreciate the efforts made by the state and the competent authorities to combat the drugs problem. However, at the same time we are also diametrically opposed to any approach that says that the war on drugs can be fought only by strengthening the coercive machinery. Our proposal is based on a set of measures relating to prevention - treatment- rehabilitation- suppression of trafficking, with the emphasis on prevention. We uphold positions of principle:

1. Prevention should include proper information as its constituent part.
2. It is essential to create all those proper conditions so that young people will develop a mature personality able to resist drugs. Our philosophy is focused on arming the youth people with values, ideals and visions capable of creating within them the necessary resistance against drugs so that as few young people as possible will fall victims to drugs.
3. We are totally opposed to any ideas of superficially distinguishing between "soft" and hard drugs, but also to their legalisation.

The following contribute to the fight against drugs:

- I. The upgrading and modernisation of free public education,
- II. The combating of unemployment, especially among the young,
- III. The further development of amateur cultural activities with the establishment of more multi-use youth centres through the direct and dynamic involvement of local government,
- IV. The development of mass popular sports for all,

- V. The elaboration of special educational programmes for teachers, parents, the judiciary and other interested parties involved in the overall battle effort,
- VI. The establishment of special treatment hostels with specialised, individualised treatment and rehabilitation programmes, so that no user is sent to prison,
- VII. The revision of the law so that attention is turned towards the traffickers and not the users,
- VIII. The further intensification of the activities of the Anti-Drugs Council through the constant study and monitoring of the drugs phenomenon based on scientifically documented studies and research.

Within this framework, we must welcome the adoption of a large number of measures in this direction by the present government and the elaboration of the new national strategy 2009 - 2013. The adoption of the institution of the Co-ordinator of the Anti-Drugs Council is a positive step that will give weight and flexibility to the Anti-Drugs Council.

AKEL and the Peoples Movement as a whole will continue to be at the forefront of the struggle against addictive substances and will put forward positions and proposals, mobilise its forces among the youth and local government and work with ADC, with all agencies, voluntary organisations and society as a whole in order to create a social front against addictive substances.

## **25. SPORTS**

Sports, together with physical education, constitute an extension of the cultural development of the people. In proper conditions, it can cultivate the abilities and the character of an individual, offer creative recreation and leisure and contribute to the multifaceted development of one's personality. Sports cultivate consciences with universal values; develop togetherness and solidarity between peoples and people. In modern times, the social role of sports with difficulty is materialized because many its aspects have already been commercialized. The rapidly evolving social conditions are transforming that role into a desirable but distant target. Its commercialization, together with economic and other interests, creates and develops phenomena that derail sports it's the social function.

Competitive sports at its highest level, can contribute in the projection of our country abroad, through international athletic success and participations. On the other hand, sports of pastime constitute a means for the creation of better living conditions and upgrading of quality of life. AKEL since its foundation highlighted the importance and role that sports can have in the development of people's quality of life for all. This is reflected in the historical decision of the Party and the Peoples Movement, for the foundation of Educational and Athletic Associations: a decision that constituted a landmark in the social, cultural and athletic development of our country.

Drawing from our long-standing and continuous presence over the years, the Central Committee of AKEL decided to establish the Reward of Athletic Service “Kosta Lympouri and Niki Georgiou”. Through this Reward, we aspire to honor individuals and groups that have made a decisive contribution to the development of sports in our country and who through their services and ethos, have made their mark on our society's athletic life. Through the establishment of this Reward, we also honor two comrades who through their struggles, embodied and personified all the above-mentioned values: two pioneering and tireless workers of Cypriot sports, Kostas Lympouris and Niki Georgiou.

The Cyprus Sports Organization (KOA), as the leading athletic authority of Cyprus and other competent agencies, need to play a decisive role for the achievement of the goals we put forth. The cooperation of these agencies and bodies with organized groups and sports agencies constitutes a necessary condition for the implementation of athletic policy.

### **1. Mass - Social Sports**

In the past few years, important steps for the promotion of social sports have been taken, through the collaboration of KOA with the local self-government authorities. This policy should be strengthened, aiming at providing equal opportunities of access to sports to all citizens, irrespective of gender, age and national origin. At the same time, they should promote social cohesion and integration programmes for marginal and vulnerable groups of the population.

### **2. Competitive Sports - Agencies**

Competitive sports, in the past few years, have attained important successes in international competitions. This is the result of the collective efforts by all component parties and of the schemes, KOA has implemented. Clubs, Gymnastic associations and the Federations are all fundamental factors in the development of competitive sports. It is imperative that all agencies be modernized, according to the directives and recommendations of the Council of Europe on “Good governing”. The need for the democratisation and cleansing and catharsis of athletic agencies and federations constitute a constant and long-standing position of AKEL.

### **3. School Sports**

The organization and development of sports at school represents a basic precondition for the development of sports as a whole. We aim to raise school student's health students and the advancement of athletic talents, through the upgrading of the Physical Education lesson at all levels of the education system. We support the reinforcement of the Athletic School, as well as the cultivation of the idea of good and fair play through the educational system.

### **4. Football**

Football in Cyprus, at its highest level, has already become commercialised. Economic interests, outside interventions, expediencies and general social problems foster fanaticism and intolerance, damaging the idea of good and fair play. The championships of the Cyprus Football Federation (KOP) face long-standing problems of credibility that are enhanced by the problems in the rendering of justice and the way that KOP is functioning. We are aiming to promote a correct and clean football,

a credible championship through institutional changes in the entire spectrum of Cypriot football and more specifically in KOP.

#### **5. Rural teams - clubs**

Football and teams in the countryside regions must receive every economic and other assistance through special rural sports schemes. A coordinated effort to tackle the great problems, such as the administrative staffing of associations, the creation of athletic grounds and others is demanded.

#### **6. Sport Infrastructure works**

The creation of new athletic facilities must be promoted within the framework of the policy for their isomeric geographic distribution to cover all areas of the country. Within the framework of the backing of social sports and in cooperation with the Municipal and Community authorities, we support the creation of a network of low cost construction and maintenance athletic grounds and facilities that would be easily available and accessible to these groups of the population.

#### **7. Violence & Hooliganism**

The phenomena of violence and hooliganism preoccupies Cypriot society as a whole, which demands henceforth their cracking down because they are an offence for our culture and shame the athletic idea of good and fair play. As AKEL, we have repeatedly dealt with these questions. Violence in the athletic grounds is part of the wider problem of juvenile delinquency, with social and economic causes. The combating of violence should be multifaceted and on all levels, focusing on prevention and education. These phenomena are tackled does not only involve action by the police, but society as a whole. It concerns our educational system, the Cyprus Youth Board and youth organizations, competent federations, clubs and leading athletic figures, political parties and the mass media. All social agencies dealing with sport and more particularly competitive games must assume their responsibilities. Concrete initiatives, actions and dialogue are required with the organized fan clubs. Today such initiatives are more important, bearing in mind that fascist and extreme right wing organizations have appeared in grounds.

#### **8. Doping**

Doping constitutes one of the most recognizable enemies of sports that are taking on greater dimensions. The huge economic incentives in sports are the main reason for the increased cases of doping. We support the newly established Authority against Doping and the efforts to combat this dangerous phenomenon.

#### **9. Athletic Staff Training-Education**

We support the establishment and functioning of a Sports' Academy that will represent the foundation by which athletic education and training will be developed and advance and the promotion of scientific research and training on sports issues.

#### **10. Sports and Rapprochement**

As AKEL, we believe that sport can be utilised for the rapprochement between the two communities and contribute to the contacts between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Sports and the athletic meetings between Greek Cypriots and

Turkish Cypriots can help towards the creation of conditions that will lead to the solution and reunification of our homeland.

### **In conclusion**

For the development of sports in Cyprus, we will attach special importance to the issues related to the eradication of negative phenomena in the field of sports, the combating of the phenomenon of doping, the stamping out of “fixed” matches and results and the restoration of confidence in sports clubs and institutions, through the operation of athletic justice in its correct dimensions, the exercise of substantive and effective control in all fields of athletic activity, the continuous education of society with the ideals of athleticism and the full democratisation of sports.

## **26. ECOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The issues regarding the environmental and ecological crisis are a central cause of concern all over the world and in all societies. AKEL considers the crisis to be a political, economic and social issue. Humanity's life and actions over time have relied solely on the management and exploitation of natural resources, both for its survival and for economic and social development. With the development of capitalism, the competition between society and nature manifested itself in an explosive way, with the productive relationships being based on the senseless use of natural resources and the exploitation of labour, and profit being the main aim goal, and the accumulation of capital the main result. This is reflected today in the global crisis of capitalism and deterioration of international environmental problems, the main effects of which are the inequitable distribution of wealth, accumulation of poverty for half the world's population, the terrifying effects of climate change with extreme weather phenomena, and the dramatic reduction of bio-diversity. AKEL believes that only through a sustainable model of development can humanity and the natural environment as a whole survive and have true choices in the near future, and only thus can the planet remain capable of sustaining life in the future.

The development model that was followed in Cyprus after independence evolved in parallel with international trends. The forceful division of the Cypriot ecosystem has worsened the environmental problems after the Turkish invasion, as well as by unfettered development, but also by the absence, for decades, of a correct and comprehensive state policy on development and the environment.

AKEL considers that environmental policy today should primarily include the adoption of new policies for economic and social development, the strengthening of the legal framework for protection of the environment and the environmental management structures. This can be achieved through:

- Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development, where the main criterion should be the availability of the island's natural resources for current and future needs and,

- The establishment of a Central Environmental Agency that will act as an umbrella for all government services dealing with environmental issues.

In recent years, there has been increased awareness among public opinion on ecological matters. At the same time, despite the problems accumulated over decades, a series of important issues were promoted for solution: the energy problem, coming of natural gas, gradual promotion of renewable energy sources, the Akamas Management Plan, the transport problem, partial promotion of household waste management, the assertion of the right of Cyprus to be declared a GMO-free zone, the legislation on integrated water management, etc.

Furthermore, we are aiming at the following:

### **1) Climate change**

Over the past decades, global warming has become irrevocably linked to the gradual rise in temperature and unfettered exploitation of natural resources and capitalist industrial development. Owing to its geographical position, Cyprus is among the first countries to experience the effects of climate change with increases in temperature, extreme weather phenomena and the threat of desertification. Our aim is to elaborate a Strategic Plan aimed at adjusting to climate change, which will provide for the drawing up of proposals and suggestions to the EU, as well as the assertion of funds from relevant programmes. In order to tackle the problems arising from climate change, as AKEL we consider it essential to implement the measures adopted by the special session on this issue which was held in April 2010 in Bolivia.

### **2) Bio-diversity - Food**

AKEL attaches particular importance to the protection and safeguarding of bio-diversity, which constitutes the wealth upon which all forms of life are based on. The recognition by the EU of the right of Cyprus to be declared a fully GMO free zone is a very significant issue, so that their cultivation and the destruction of the bio-diversity of the island can be prevented. In addition, the quality control of food and the harmonisation with the European REACH programme is imperative.

### **3) Energy- renewable energy resources (RES)**

Human activity, as any other form of activity is based on the use of energy and this is a basic operation of the eco-system in all its forms. The strategic goal remains the gradual replacement of fossil fuels through the utilisation of Renewable Energy Sources (solar and wind), the promotion of energy saving systems and the rational use of the RES Fund to the benefit of the lower-income classes. With a view to ensuring viability of the RES Fund, it is essential to evaluate the entire philosophy of the scheme.

### **4) Waste Management**

The problem of waste management is one of the greatest environmental issues of contemporary societies. All actions in this area must aim at reducing the

production of waste and its reuse. Specific policies have been defined for the management of specific waste flows as part of a comprehensive waste management strategy. The project and its implementation phases are proceeding at satisfactory rates.

#### **5) Water Resources**

Water is a very precious resource for our island and it is therefore essential to ensure its rational management. The Integrated Water Management Law and the establishment of the Water Management Advisory Committee will mean that all powers will be concentrated within one agency that will be able to plan and implement a comprehensive management policy.

#### **6) “Natura 2000” - Akamas**

The EU Natura 2000 Network promotes the protection of bio-diversity through the preservation of natural habitats, flora and fauna, the inclusion of specific areas and the drawing up of Management Plans. The Council of Ministers’ decision on the Akamas Management Plan has given a solution to a long-standing problem. The plan must be implemented.

#### **7) Built Environment**

We support the implementation of the basic policies of the government programme of Demetris Christofias with regard to the built environment. These include:

- Completion of prioritisation of Development Plans by drawing up an Island Plan and Area Plans and the replacement of the Policy Statement on the countryside with regional Spatial Plans;
- Revision of town planning zones through transparent and participatory procedures;
- Preparation and implementation of master plans in all communities;
- Preservation and promotion of our architectural heritage through the radical revision of the incentives scheme and the increase of grants for listed buildings.

#### **8) Transport- Traffic**

Transport and traffic are prioritised as among the most serious problems of contemporary Cypriot society, particularly in large urban centres. The government has made many efforts in the right direction, proving the determination of the Christofias government to find a solution. AKEL welcomes the beginning of the implementation of the new public transport system, which is indeed a radical and necessary innovation. In general, the alleviation of the problem of traffic/transport requires above all political will, significant investment and the cultivation of a new culture among the population.

### **3) Soil and Mineral Resources**

The soil is a non-renewable resource, fundamental to human survival because it provides sources of food, raw materials and housing. The building and road development observed in Cyprus and elsewhere relies exclusively on the exploitation of these non-renewable resources and it is imperative to implement careful planning for the sustainable development of these resources.

### **Conclusions**

AKEL evaluates the struggle for tackling ecological and environmental destruction at the top of our political agenda, since it is to do not only with the struggle of the working class, but the struggle for life itself and our planet. In addition to our specific actions, our aim is to orientate the education system towards raising the public's awareness with regard to our culture and historical tradition, an understanding of the values of an alternative lifestyle and in general, encouraging the participation of people in the shaping and exercising of environmental policy.

AKEL supports and greets the activation of the organised Environmental Movement. It considers its contribution and action as positive and will aim to strengthen co-operation with it based on common aims. This issue is deeply political and the level of organisation of the forces, which resist the catastrophic course that is being followed, will determine the lives of future generations. It is for this reason that we must be more actively involved in environmental issues, whether as a Party or as individual members and officials. Environmental policy is for AKEL a matter of the production of civilisation.

### **27. OVERSEAS CYPRIOTS**

Overseas Cypriots were and still are an integral part of the Cypriot people, a part that keeps on fighting for many years for the rights of our people's struggle and for the promotion of the Cyprus problem worldwide.

During the recent years, serious efforts have been undertaken to inform and better coordinate the Movement of Overseas Cypriots and their actions have periodically been better utilized for the promotion of the Cyprus Problem and enlightenment of the international community, especially in those countries considered decision-making centres. The role of the Overseas Cypriots is becoming even more significant and useful, particularly in the current phase of the Cyprus Problem.

For our Party the briefing/enlightenment of organized groups among of Cypriots abroad, consequently of public opinion in those countries where many of our compatriots live, has been, and still is an important part of our work.

Our Party operates Branches in Britain and in Greece. These Branches play an important role in all matters that concern our Party, and participate in almost all the election campaigns, especially because of the large number of students in these two countries.

Our Party's Branch in the UK circulates a weekly newspaper, which greatly contributes in the enlightenment both of our first-generation overseas compatriots, as well as of the younger generation, as it has several pages in English.

Of course, there are new communities of overseas Cypriots in Eastern Europe where no organized groups exist, but where they do exist, they are not affiliated to the World Movement of Overseas Cypriots.

### **Counselor for the Overseas and Repatriated Cypriots**

Despite the reorganization that has been done in the Service of Overseas Cypriots and the improvement of the service, nonetheless a Counselor for the Overseas Cypriots and Repatriates must be appointed. This Counselor must be a political person who will chair the Service of Overseas Cypriots. The Service's personnel must be qualified on various issues, such as health, education, defense, and others that concern Overseas Cypriots and the Repatriates.

### **Advisory Committee of Cypriots Abroad**

It is important to reorganize the Advisory Committee of Cypriots Abroad, which will work closely with the Foreign Minister and be in regular contact with the President of the Republic for the coordination, activation and use of Overseas Cypriots, and for the better projection and promotion of enlightenment on the Cyprus Problem.

### **Relations between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots Abroad**

A specific policy should be formulated, concerning the relations with the T/C Overseas, addressing their problems. The closer relation between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in the Diaspora should be promoted more vigorously and practically.

### **Maintenance of Overseas' Cypriot identity**

AKEL must continue to work for the strengthening of state's assistance to the educational institutions of the Diaspora, in order to sustain and continue the important work being done for the preservation of the identity of overseas second and third-generation's Cypriots in their countries of residence.

### **Cypriot Youth Overseas**

P.OM.A.K, the youth organization of Overseas Cypriots, the Departments of the Federations' Youth and the local clubs created, are a correct and creative development. However, this development is not sufficient as the new generation is born and raised in a different country, does not have the same experiences and is not attracted by the same concerns. The problems arising from this conclusion should be tackled even more specifically.

Furthermore, concrete efforts should be undertaken for the interaction between P.OM.A.K and EDON, the Party's Youth, for the organization of joint events.

## **28. REPATRIATED CYPRIOTS**

In recent years, a large number of overseas Cypriots have returned to Cyprus. Repatriation is not a simple affair; it involves difficulties and problems, especially for the younger generations.

The state has pledged to tackle the problems of our repatriated fellow citizens with social sensitivity. The organisations of repatriated Cypriots, headed by the Cyprus Association of UK Repatriated Cypriots, have played an important role in the promotion of the solution of these problems.

The separation of the issues concerning repatriated Cypriots from those handled by the Overseas Cypriots Service and the determination exhibited by the Christofias government have contributed to the solving of many problems that were pending for years. These include:

- The provision of incentives for the acquisition of a first home;
- The right of Cypriots abroad to information about the labour market in Cyprus and their registration in the computerised register;
- The publication of a booklet on the rights of repatriated Cypriots;

- The right to health care in the first year after repatriation.

At the same time, serious efforts are being made to provide additional incentives and to give solutions to the problems daily faced by repatriated Cypriots.

AKEL has contributed decisively to promoting solutions of repatriated Cypriots problems within and outside of the House of Representatives and will continue its efforts to support them. Of course, problems still exist and the state must tackle these with more care and compassion and offer incentives to encourage the return and permanent settlement of many more of our compatriots. We - as a state and as a people - have a duty to show warmth and affection towards repatriated Cypriots and to accept and integrate them in society under decent conditions. AKEL is aware of the problems they face and will continue to work towards solving them. Our repatriated compatriots are part of Cypriot society and it is our duty and obligation to integrate them within it.

## **29. Migrants- Migration Policy**

The Migration Phenomenon has a long history dating back to hundreds of years. However, no matter how old this phenomenon is, the motives that lead people to migrate remain stable and unaltered: on one hand, the search to find political protection (asylum) in the cases where one's life is endangered and on the other hand, the search for better working and living conditions, were the reasons that always forced people to migrate.

Neo-liberalism, which is dominant today as the policy of the big multinational economic interests and imperialist states, is imposing a harsh globalization model that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. By expanding inequalities, through the brutal exploitation of working people and the depreciation of the value of labour, it creates armies of poor and desperate people that are forced to migrate. Migration is therefore not a result of a conscious decision but mainly as a way out of the deadlocks and inequalities.

AKEL, in its long history over the years has proved in practise that it is a party of all the working people, irrespective of their race, colour, gender, religion or nationality. We condemn in the most decisive way all xenophobic and racist phenomena that are incompatible with the internationalist and human-centred ideology of AKEL. We deplore the effort by some nationalist and right wing circles to cultivate within Cypriot society xenophobic racist sentiment and conversely to exploit them politically.

We categorically condemn the utilization of migrants as a cheap labour force and the employers' effort to take advantage of the availability of an increasingly big and indeed cheap workforce in order to undermine their employee's rights and downgrade their terms of employment.

The strength of working people is mainly based on its unity and class fraternization. The only protective shield available to migrants from acute exploitation, but also to Cypriots themselves from the deterioration of their terms of employment and undermining of collective agreements is the employment of all workers with the same terms of employment.

The Government's efforts to adopt an inclusive and comprehensive migration policy in Cyprus must continue. This policy, with devotion to the respect of human rights and dignity, should be in a position to tackle successfully all the challenges that lie ahead, but also to make the most out of the opportunities created by migration to Cyprus. Particular emphasis should be placed on the achievement of social coherence through the integration of migrants and refugees in Cypriot society, on the regulation of legal migration and tackling of illegal migration and human trafficking.

Concerning the issue of asylum, Cyprus is obliged, within the framework of its conventional obligations, to remain devoted to the provision of international protection to those who are in real need. At the same time, the Government should continue the effort, which up to date has brought positive results, of confronting the phenomenon of the abuse of the asylum system. On the EU level, the Government should continue to exert pressure for highlighting the need of a more equal distribution of responsibilities and burden sharing between member states, mainly within the framework of the Common European Asylum System, expected to be completed by 2012.