

# Human rights issues and debates during the 2009 EU parliament election campaign: The Case of Cyprus

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## 1. Overview

1.1 Overall racism, xenophobia, related intolerance and other relevant human rights issues did not feature prominently in the Cypriot European Parliamentary elections campaign. Other issues dominated the agenda such the Cyprus problem, national governance and to a lesser degree some EU-related issues, which were again localized, often connected to the Cyprus problem. For instance the issue as to whether Cyprus should join 'Partnership for Peace'; or the question of which of the European political parties, which the national parties are affiliated to, has more influence in the European Parliament, thus allowing for better lobbying prospects when the European Parliament discusses the Cyprus problem or how to derive more benefits for Cyprus in general. The issues selected to attract Cypriot voters to the ballot box (borders and migration, budget, energy and standardisation) did not feature in the debates. Amidst these debates, human rights issues were marginalised; however, to the extent that there are human rights issues embedded in the Cyprus problem, human rights were reference points but only as a background issue and rather one-sided as they were essentially about Greek-Cypriot rights, not human rights for *both* communities, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. A relevant issue relates to the accusations against the Parliamentary spokesperson of DISY<sup>1</sup> Christos Pourgourides who also represents his party at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Pourgourides was accused of being 'unpatriotic' and 'anti-Hellenic' for having co-signed a motion at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calling for the investigation of allegations made by Turks [or Muslims] living in the Greek islands of Rhodes and Kos about human rights violations by the Greek state. In view of the European Parliamentary elections his opponents tried to take advantage of this act to derive benefits for themselves by attacking Pourgourides and through him indirectly attack his party. For the same reason, even his own party distanced itself from this act pledging that Pourgourides will not be proposed as representative of the party in the next session of the Parliamentary Assembly. There were two other human rights issues raised but quite marginally: first, the fact that Cyprus applies a minimum age restriction of 25 in order to run as a candidate for the European Parliament elections; and secondly, the electoral law in Cyprus has stringent and outdated restrictions on freedom of assembly and freedom of the press on the days preceding the elections and on the election day itself. Main actors: politicians from all political parties (M. Karoyian, Y. Omirou, D. Syllouris), MEP candidates from his own party (Y. Kasoulides, E. Theocharous) and MEP candidates from other parties (N. Koutsou, S. Panayides and others), newspapers *Phileltheros*, *Simerini*, *Mahi*, *Politis*, *Alitheia*, *Haravgi* and TV channels (ANTENA, SIGMA, MEGA, CyBC).

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<sup>1</sup> The initials stand for Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός [Democratic Rally]. It is a large moderate right wing party currently in the opposition. In the Euroelections, it received more votes than any other party.

- 1.2 Media attention was drawn to one of DISY candidates for the Euroelections, a young and outspoken Greek Orthodox theologian by the name of Andreas Pitsillides, who first appeared at the political stage during the archbishopric elections of 2006, as spokesman for one of the contenders, the Bishop of Kykkou, one of the richest bishoprics. Media attention was drawn firstly due to his hugely extravagant media campaign (regular spots on television, several giant posters and newspaper adverts) the cost of which evidently surpassed by far the cost of the media campaign of any other candidate, a fact raising questions about his sources of funding and in particular about the involvement of the church in political life. Pitsillides himself denied having received money from the church and claimed instead that his funding came from rich persons whom he had helped in his capacity as a theologian when they were going through ‘personal’ and ‘social problems’. Pitsillides pledged to provide a list of his funders but never did so. Secondly, he was criticised for his populist anti-communist stance in TV election debates, where he denied the right of persons of Left political persuasions to contest democratic elections, describing communists as a ‘cancer’ in political life; his own party leader stated that he had stepped out of line. Commentators referred to ‘the Pitsillides phenomenon’ as a media-generated distortion in modern politics resulting from the inadequate legislative framework regarding funding of electoral campaigns, the involvement of the church in politics and problematic selection processes within political parties. Main Actors: Andreas Pitsillides, other MEP candidates, journalists from different TV channels, radio and the press. Pitsillides was not elected but did considerably well in the elections as a newcomer in politics
- 1.3 Questions of racism and xenophobia against migrants and Turkish-Cypriots were for the first time directly and openly articulated in elections in Cyprus. Traditionally in Cyprus there was no typical far right / xenophobic populist or Neo-Nazi party, focusing for instance on anti-immigration populism or anti-Semitic politics; even if there were hidden or indirect references to these in the discourse of the small anti-Turkish and far Right groups operating within mainstream political parties. The novelty of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections is twofold: first, a neo-Nazi type of party called ‘Ethniko Laiko Metopo’ (ELAM)<sup>2</sup> contested the elections and received 663 votes (0.22 percent); it received no media coverage or air time. Secondly, a party on the Greek-Cypriot Right, EVROKO,<sup>3</sup> tried to capitalise on xenophobic anti-immigration by arguing that the Greek-Cypriots “are becoming a minority in their own country” and tried to connect the issue of settlers from Turkey to the alleged ‘out of control’ employment of ‘illegal aliens’ who are blamed for taking the jobs of Cypriots and for the rise in crime. The main actors were the leadership of EVROKO, particularly the leader D. Syllouris and the MEP candidates of this party, as well as various media promoting such ideas (e.g. ANTENA TV). These arguments were criticised primarily in the newspaper *Politis*, which may possibly account for the fact that EVROKO did not vigorously pursue this line of argument until the end.
- 1.4 The question of gender representation in the elections was raised albeit not as a prominent issue in the campaign: gender was not in focus in the electoral campaign but was raised by some women’s and human rights organisations and by a few of the women candidates. The female candidates from the three largest parties raised the question of female representation in the European Parliament and two of these, out of a total of six Cypriot MEPs, actually got elected (E. Theocharous, who is MEP for DISY and A. Papadopoulou, who is MEP for DIKO<sup>4</sup>). A third woman candidate lost by a close margin (S. Koukouma, MEP candidate for the ruling party AKEL<sup>5</sup>). The Green Party’s percentages are far too small to elect an MEP, however four out of six candidate MEPs

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<sup>2</sup> The initials stand for Εθνικό Λαϊκό Μέτωπο (National Popular Front).

<sup>3</sup> The initials stand for Ευρωπαϊκό Κόμμα (European Party).

<sup>4</sup> Δημοκρατικό Κόμμα [Democratic Party].

<sup>5</sup> Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζομένου Λαού [Progressive Party of the Working People].

were women, including their recently elected woman leader, who had a good campaign and did put some gender issues on the agenda. Main Actors: the above candidates and other female MEPs, and some women’s organizations such as MIGS, and journalists from the *Cyprus Mail* newspaper.

1.5 Finally the low participation of Turkish-Cypriots was marginally raised by the Greek-Cypriot press, but the general issue of the right of Turkish-Cypriots to elect their representatives from a separate electoral list as provided for in the Cypriot constitution was prominent in the Turkish-Cypriot media and press. The press articles in the areas controlled by the Republic concentrated on the fact that three London-based Turkish Cypriots are applying to the ECJ seeking to have the elections carried out in Cyprus for the European Parliament cancelled because the two seats accruing to the Turkish Cypriot community were not afforded to Turkish Cypriots. The issue of potential human rights violations of Turkish Cypriots did not feature in the electoral agenda in any way. Main Actors: Turkish-Cypriot press and media, three Turkish-Cypriots who applied to the ECJ to annul the Cypriot European Parliamentary Elections.

Issue	List of main actors	Importance of the issue during the election campaign (High, Medium, Low)	Impact of the issue on the outcome of the election
1. Human rights of Greek-Cypriots, and to a much lesser extent the Turkish-Cypriots in the context of the Cyprus problem	Political parties (AKEL, DISY, DEKO, EDEK, EVROKO, Green Party, ELAM)  The media, (TV, radio, press and electronic media)	Medium to Low for the large mainstream parties  High for the nationalist/ far right parties	The post election results indicate that the parties which took a nationalist or tough line on the Cyprus problem i.e. those who have a maximalist agenda, essentially want to give as few rights to Turkish-Cypriots as possible (i.e. EVROKO, DIKO) lost significant ground in the elections. The other issues regarding the minimum age for standing in the elections and the restrictions in free association and information in the last days of the elections until the ballots are closed, are issues that may be raised before the next elections for reform.
2. The role and involvement of the church in elections through the funding of a candidate’s campaign	Andreas Pitsillides (MEP candidate DISY)  CyBC, MEGA, SIGMA, Politis	Low/Medium	Pitsillides came fourth in his party, who elected two MEPs with 18.687 votes, which is not bad for a newcomer. The issues of the role of

			undeclared funders, unlimited spending, the role of the church and religion in elections remains an open issue somehow subsumed in personality questions.
3. Anti-immigration and xenophobia	EVROKO  ELAM	Low/medium	The political parties that tried to capitalise on a xenophobic anti-immigration did badly in the elections. ELAM received only 663 votes or 0.22 percent; EVROKO polled 4,12 percent (compared to 5,75 percent at the 2006 National Parliamentary elections and 12,45 percent at the 2004 European Parliamentary elections)
4. Gender issues and participation of women	Antigoni Papadopoulou (MEP candidate DIKO), Eleni Theocharous (MEP candidate DISY), Skevi Koukouma (MEP candidate AKEL), other women candidates	Low/medium	It had some impact on the elections results: Two women were elected and one was close. Also we had a large number of female candidates. However, this does not mean necessarily mean that more gender issues will be addressed.
5. The non-participation of Turkish-Cypriots and the right to elect their representatives from a separate electoral list as provided for elections in the Cypriot constitution	Turkish-Cypriots	Low for Greek-Cypriot public debate, high for Turkish-Cypriot public debate	The issue had little impact on the elections; however it merely reinforced Turkish-Cypriot attitudes that their participation is not really sought.

## 2. Issues and debates

### 2.1.1 The Cyprus problem as human rights violation of the Greek-Cypriots

2.1.2 The broader political context of the debate is the ‘Cyprus problem’, as Cypriot political parties are still primarily organised around it and need to return to it as a reference point when addressing the other major political issues, national or European which are all subsumed into the ‘key issue’, i.e. the Cyprus problem. Currently the Government is headed by the President, Demetris Christofias, who belongs to the Communist party AKEL, in coalition with two other smaller parties (the Centrist

DIKO and the socialist EDEK), which have traditionally been ideologically 'centrist' but take a more rejectionist stand on the Cyprus problem than AKEL, which is in favour of solution and reconciliation with the Turkish Cypriots. In opposition there is the largest party in the country, DISY. The issues selected by the representation office of European Parliament in Cyprus in order to attract voters to the polls, which were borders and migration, budget, energy and standardisation,<sup>6</sup> did not feature in the public debates. Most analysts agree that European issues appear too distant to the average Greek-Cypriot voter.<sup>7</sup> As one analyst put it: "European issues themselves had very little prominence in the campaign, to the extent that various party officials, as well as the representative of the Cyprus European Parliament Office commented on this during the election and in its immediate aftermath. The EU constituted an issue of discussion mainly in relation to its potential role in the resolution of the Cyprus problem and secondarily to the status and achievements of each party's respective political group in the EP."<sup>8</sup> Exceptionally some articles did discuss issues relating to the democratic functioning of the EU, such as the democratic deficit and the functioning of the European Parliament, but not human rights issues as such.<sup>9</sup>

- 2.1.3 Another 'Cyprus problem' perspective which featured prominently in the electoral campaign was that the two smaller right wing parties namely DIKO and EVROKO (the former being one of the coalition parties in power and the latter being one of the smallest parties in opposition) attempted to use the elections as an opportunity to attack the current President for 'too soft' in the negotiations with the Turkish Cypriot community and for not properly defending the Greek-Cypriot cause and generally focused their campaign on the Cyprus problem. The two largest political parties, DISY and AKEL (the former being the main opposition party and the latter being the party in power) refused to make the Cyprus problem their main campaigning issue for Euro-elections.<sup>10</sup> AKEL campaigned on the basis of social issues seen through their vision for the EU, around the notion of 'social Europe'.<sup>11</sup> Human rights issues per se did not feature prominently in the party's official campaign although they were raised

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<sup>6</sup> 'Novelty campaign to lure voters for euro polls', *Cyprus Mail*, 19.3. 2009.

<sup>7</sup> A. Pimbishis (2009) 'Εκλογές για το σκληρό πυρήνα των κομμάτων', in: Φιλελεύθερος (04.06.2009).

<sup>8</sup> G. Charalambous (2009) *European Parliament Election Briefing No 34, the June 2009 European Elections in the Republic of Cyprus*, available at:

[http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no\\_34\\_epern-ep09-cyprus.pdf](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no_34_epern-ep09-cyprus.pdf) (22.07.2009).

<sup>9</sup> See Emilianides (2009) 'Οι Ευρωεκλογές του μέλλοντός μας', in: *Σύγχρονη Αποψη*, May issue, <http://www.apopsi.com.cy/2009/05/1426>; C. Ioannou (2009) «Ο Ευρωπαίος ασθενής»: Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο, ο Ευρωπαίος πολίτης και το «αμφίδρομο σύνδρομο» του δημοκρατικού ελλείμματος', in: *Σύγχρονη Αποψη*, April issue, <http://www.apopsi.com.cy/2009/05/1423>

<sup>10</sup> As Charalambous points out: "Campaign debates, candidates' newspaper articles and party announcements did not touch on European issues with much more depth and sophistication than in the presidential elections. Slogans in party booklets were general, domestically oriented and never included references to the future of the EU as a supranational actor or to the most prominent problems of the community itself. Of course an absolute generalisation would be flawed. Individual candidates, who had served as MEPs before (from AKEL and the Democratic Rally) and at times some parties did touch on EU-wide issues, including the democratic deficit, the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU's proposed measures to tackle the economic crisis and foreign and security policy matters. Mostly, however, European issues had a domestic dimension." G. Charalambous (2009) *European Parliament Election Briefing No 34, the June 2009 European Elections in the Republic of Cyprus*, available at:

[http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no\\_34\\_epern-ep09-cyprus.pdf](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no_34_epern-ep09-cyprus.pdf) (22.07.2009).

<sup>11</sup> See the letter of the AKEL leader, A. Kyprianou (2009) 'Ευρωεκλογές 2009, Επιστολή Γενικού Γραμματέα ΑΚΕΛ προς Ψηφοφόρους', in: *Χαραυγή* (10.06.2009). Also see the party position of the central committee for the European Parliament elections at [http://www.akel.org.cy/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=5887](http://www.akel.org.cy/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=5887) (24.07.2009).

by the individual candidates themselves.<sup>12</sup> DISY on the other hand, being the official opposition party, had little in its campaign on human rights issues, preferring to stress its Europeanist credentials to contrast with AKEL, which it criticised of dogmatism and euro-scepticism.<sup>13</sup> Given the results of the elections, where AKEL and DISY received over 71 percent of the vote, the attempts of the smallest parties to divert the attention or focus of the elections to issues of ‘patriotism’ and a tough line on the Cyprus problem can only be seen as having failed. EDEK, the fourth largest party, which, together with other small parties, is also a ‘hardliner’ on the Cyprus problem, preferred a more ‘European approach’ to the elections focusing on the EU credentials of the party, just as the two larger parties (DISY and AKEL) did. Certain candidates raised general issues of violations of Greek-Cypriot rights by the continuing Turkish occupation of the northern part of the country and positioned themselves on the nationalist/ hard line of Greek-Cypriot politics; this line tends to be suspicious of the current efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem and critical of the current negotiation efforts.<sup>14</sup> A relevant side issue that is directly related to human rights is the attacks on the senior MP of DISY Christos Pourgourides, the Parliamentary spokesperson of DISY and representative to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, for endorsing a motion calling for the investigation into allegations made by Turks living in the Greek islands of Rhodes and Kos about human rights violations by the Greek state. He was attacked by the right-wingers and nationalists for acting ‘unpatriotically’ and contrary to the interests of Greece, the so-called ‘mother country’ of the Greek-Cypriot nationalists. The matter was connected to the European Parliamentary elections in the public debate as the media and other politicians picked up on it during the campaign to question the ‘sort of politicians representing Cyprus in European fora.’ Many politicians, journalists and commentators accused Pourgourides for acts bordering on treason.<sup>15</sup> Even his own party tried to distance itself from this act<sup>16</sup> with his party leader pledging that the MP will not be reappointed in the next session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly;<sup>17</sup> this position was interpreted by commentators as a populist stand given the Euro-elections which were forthcoming in a few days. The MEP candidates for the right-wing parties, as well as the socialist EDEK candidates, issued statements condemning Pourgourides. There were some articles in the press which defended him and praised

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<sup>12</sup> See the interview for instance of the candidate J. Joseph -G. Kentas (2009) ‘Συνέντευξη Ιωσήφ Ιωσήφ «Για μια ανθρωποκεντρική και κοινωνικά ευαίσθητη ΕΕ»’ in: *Σύγχρονη Άποψη*, May, <http://www.apopsi.com.cy/2009/05/1646>

<sup>13</sup> This was at the core of the closing speech of DISY leader at the end of the campaign, see J. Theodoulou (2009) ‘Final blows and low blows’, in: *Cyprus Mail* (05.06.2009).

<sup>14</sup> For instance the candidate of DIKO with the characteristic headline “No, we shall not submit”, see A. Papadopoulou (2009) ‘Όχι, δεν υποκύπτουμε’, in: *Σημερινή* (03.05.2009). Another young candidate of DIKO, who is also on the nationalist wing adopts similar arguments, see his interview with the Right-wing journal *Sihroni Apopsi* - M. Kontos (2009) ‘Διεκδικητικότητα βάσει αρχών και αξιών - Συνέντευξη Σίμου Α. Αγγελίδη στον Μιχάλη Κοντό’, *Σύγχρονη Άποψη*, <http://www.apopsi.com.cy/2009/05/1643> (22.07.2009).

<sup>15</sup> For instance the editor of Simerini who called him “the big merchant of patriotism”, see S. Iakovides (2009) ‘Ο μεγαλέμπορος του πατριωτισμού Χρήστος Πουργουρίδης!’, in: *Σημερινή* (20.05.2009). The journalist who is a collaborator/correspondent of Fileleftheros and MEGA TV Michalis Ignatiou went further to accuse him of treason and collaboration with the enemy: “from a nationalist and Turk-eater he is wares a fez” in the title of his article M. Ignatiou (2009) ‘Το...φέσι (που έβαλε) ενος εθνικόφρονα-τουρκοφάγου – Και η Ελσα, η φίλη της Ντόρας, με ανθελληνικό σαρίκι;’, in: *olympiada* (26.05.2009), <http://olympia.gr/2009/05/26/cyprus-right-party/> (23.07.2009).

<sup>16</sup> His fellow party member, the incumbent MEP and candidate for the Presidential elections of 2008, Yannankis Kasoulides openly criticised him invoking his ethnic/national origin and the potential damage to the relations with Greece. He did this during the campaign and this is also available on internet - see <http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&VideoID=58392990> (24.07.2009).

<sup>17</sup> E. Hazou (2009) ‘DISY sideline Pourgourides after PACE fiasco’, in: *Cyprus Mail* (26.05.2009).

him: “Pourgourides deserves congratulations and not cannibalism”.<sup>18</sup> Another commentator called the affair an “ostrich-like behaviour”, which is an expression implying hypocrisy.<sup>19</sup> Pourgourides himself claimed that he signed the document because it would be better to investigate the allegations rather than not – without necessarily agreeing with them and that ignoring the allegations would have been a blatant case of double standards, given Cyprus’ preoccupation with human rights violations by Turkey.<sup>20</sup> Two other human rights issues were raised in the media, which are unrelated to the Cyprus problem: first, the fact that Cyprus is one of the three EU countries that requires MEP candidates to have a minimum age of 25<sup>21</sup>; and secondly, the stringent and outdated restrictions on freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and the restrictions in free association and freedom of information during the last days prior to the elections and until the ballots are closed, are issues that may be raised before the next elections for reform.<sup>22</sup>

- 2.1.4 The main actors involved in the debate were the political parties: the new leadership of DIKO M. Karoyian, Y. Kolokasides, N. Papadopoulos, K. Kenevezos and some of the MEP candidates for the party such as Simos Angelides; the leadership and all candidates of EVROKO and to some extent the Green Party, particularly MP Y. Perdikis. Also the leader of EDEK Y. Omirou and the leaders of EVROKO D. Syllouris, N. Koutsou, S. Panayides. Various TV channels and the newspapers with a nationalistic/tough line, such as the DIAS media group (consisting of SIGMA TV, RADIO PROTO and *Simerini* daily newspaper), ANTENA TV channel, *Phileleftheros* newspaper and to a lesser extent the private channel MEGA and the state channel CyBC. Generally, the daily newspapers *Politis*, *Alitheia* and *Haravgi* took a critical stand towards the attempts to push the debates over the Euro-elections towards a nationalist argumentation over the Cyprus problem.
- 2.1.5 Debates in the media related to the 2009 EU elections were rather intense and confrontational given the intensive manner in which the parties pursued the arguments, in their efforts to attract votes. However, the issue of human rights was not at the forefront of this; rather it was the accusation that the President is not defending ‘the human rights of Greek-Cypriots’ that was at the core of the argument of the smaller parties. In the case of the attacks against the DISY MP Pourgourides for co-signing the appeal for an investigation of human rights abuses in Greece, this seemed like a modern media witch-hunt, even though there were some media outlets like the daily newspaper *Politis* who defended the MP’s actions.
- 2.1.6 The debate more or less stopped after the EU elections, with most commentators and analysts agreeing that those who wanted a tough line on the Cyprus problem failed to mobilise support. Abstention reached a record high of 41 percent and the two largest parties with a reconciliatory line on the Cyprus problem (AKEL and DISY) saw a significant increase in their percentages: AKEL received 35,65 per cent of the votes, representing a seven percent from the 2004 Euro-elections and DISY received 35.90 per cent of the votes which is an increase of seven and a half percent from the 2004

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<sup>18</sup> C. Perikleous (2009) ‘Ό,τι αληθινό και εθνικό (2) - Μπράβο στον Χρίστο Πουργουρίδη’, in: *Πολίτης* p. 20 (31.05.2009); L. Charalambous (2009) ‘Pourgourides deserves congratulations and not cannibalism’, in: *Sunday Mail* (31.05.2009); D. Dionisiou, (2009) ‘Στρουθοκαμηλισμός’, in: *Πολίτης* (24.05.2009).

<sup>19</sup> D. Dionisiou, (2009) ‘Στρουθοκαμηλισμός’, in: *Πολίτης* (24.05.2009). Pourgourides was defended by other political analysts and activists such as former leader of the largest trade union PEO, Pavlos Dinglis and former EDEK central committee member, author Chrysostomos Perikleous.

<sup>20</sup> E. Hazou (2009) ‘DISY sideline Pourgourides after PACE fiasco’, in: *Cyprus Mail* (26.05.2009).

<sup>21</sup> ‘Greens call for reduction of age restriction to run for Euro elections’, in: *Cyprus Mail* (28.05.2009).

<sup>22</sup> Unsigned article (2009) ‘Πολιτικός αναχρονισμός’, in: *Φιλελεύθερος* (01.06.2009).

Euro-elections. Both parties together won over 71 percent of the votes.<sup>23</sup> In this sense the debate was somehow ‘settled’ with the losing parties recognising that their message was not effectively put or that their message was not well received or understood by the voters. DIKO won only 12,28 percent of the votes, which represents a decrease of five percent from the 2004 Euro-elections. In the aftermath of the Euro-election, DIKO party leader M. Karoyian argued that the party must revert to its ‘traditional’ positions which is more cautious, pro-Government and blamed the campaign for the electoral defeat. The small opposition party EVROKO received 4,12 per cent of the votes, representing one third of the votes received by their successful candidate in the last European Parliamentary elections. As for the case of Pourgourides, the DISY MP who supported the investigation against Greece for human rights abuses at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the matter came to sharp halt after the elections, save for one last exchange within his own party DISY: after the chair of the Greek Parliament issued a statement in support of Pourgourides’ action,<sup>24</sup> Pourgourides stated that he feels vindicated but disappointed with senior politicians, including fellow party members such as the re-elected DISY MEP, Y. Kasoulides, who failed to stand up to populism during the elections.<sup>25</sup> As for the other issues regarding the minimum age for standing in the elections and the restrictions in free association and information in the last days of the elections until the ballots are closed, these are serious institutional issues that need to be debated before an election is called, but so far they have not been raised again.

## 2.2 Xenophobia and anti-immigration

- 2.2.1 Despite the fact that the migration and border control was selected by the representation office of the European Parliament in Cyprus as a target issue to attract voters to polls,<sup>26</sup> the issue was not taken up by the major political parties, nor did it yield the expected electoral results for those who did pick it up (see Appendix 1). Nevertheless, it has to be noted that in these elections we have two novelties.
- 2.2.2 The first novelty is that for the first time a neo-Nazi type of party contesting, namely the ‘National Popular Front’ or ‘ELAM’, which fought the elections on nationalistic and xenophobic anti-immigrant agenda<sup>27</sup> and which is ideologically and organisationally connected (i.e. organically tied to) to a well-known Greek Neo-Nazi group and newspaper.<sup>28</sup> It received no media air time or attention and polled 663 votes or 0,22 percent of the votes, which is considered by themselves<sup>29</sup> and their

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<sup>23</sup> See D. Dionisiou, (2009) ‘4 παρατηρήσεις για το αποτέλεσμα’, in: *Πολίτης* (07.06.2009); also see G. Charalambous (2009) *European Parliament Election Briefing No 34, the June 2009 European Elections in the Republic of Cyprus*, available at:

[http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no\\_34\\_epern-ep09-cyprus.pdf](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no_34_epern-ep09-cyprus.pdf) (22.07.2009).

<sup>24</sup> ‘Στήριξε Πουργουρίδη ο Σιούφας-Συνάντηση με τον πρόεδρο της Βουλής των Ελλήνων είχε χθες ο βουλευτής του ΔΗΣΥ’, in: *Πολίτης* (26.05.2009).

<sup>25</sup> Kasoulides responded that he is saddened by the statement of Pourgourides. D. Dionysiou (2009) ‘Κόντρα για τη Ρόδο και την Κω αλλά στο βάθος Κυπριακό -Πουργουρίδης Vs Κασουλίδης’, in: *Πολίτης* (14.06.2009), p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Novelty campaign to lure voters for euro polls’, *Cyprus Mail*, 19.3. 2009.

<sup>27</sup> It has a webpage which carries all the racist, xenophobic and anti-immigrant line as it is the core of the party ideology, <http://ethnikolaikometwpo.blogspot.com/2009/06/2009.html> (22.07.2009)

<sup>28</sup> This is the *Χρυσή Αυγή* group (“Golden Dawn”), which congratulates ELAM as its “fellow fighters” for contesting the elections in Cyprus, see <http://xryshaygh.wordpress.com/europe09/> (24.07.2009).

<sup>29</sup> In its blog ELAM claims that the electoral result was a success given that it fought “against every one” with zero media exposure or coverage- see ‘Ευρωεκλογές τέλος’, at <http://ethnikolaikometwpo.blogspot.com/search/label/%CE%95%CF%85%CF%81%CF%89%CE%B5%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%B3%CE%AD%CF%82%202009> (24.07.2009).



Greek counterparts as success in their struggle “against everybody”.<sup>30</sup> It is noted that Cyprus has no tradition of parliamentary neo-Nazi or similar type of extreme right-wing parties in national politics. In previous decades Cyprus had a violent far Right group in the form of the Greek-Cypriot ‘Ethikon Metopo’ (National Front) and later ‘EOKA B’<sup>31</sup> and the Turkish-Cypriot TMT, which was connected to ‘Grey Wolves’ from Turkey, but these are of a different kind: they were highly localised and connected to the ‘deep state’ (in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus), the far right and authoritarian traditions, the dictatorships and politics of the Greek and Turkish states and their connections with the CIA to fight communism during the cold war.<sup>32</sup> In any case, the particularity of the Cyprus case must be borne in mind. The terms around which the political parties are divided are not the same as in other European countries, given that the Cypriot society is small, divided by ethnic conflict and war and has only recently acceded to the EU. The Greek-Cypriot extreme Right and its’ ideology was completely discredited by the war in 1974,<sup>33</sup> as their collaboration with the Greek junta and the coup that toppled the Cypriot President allowed the Turkish army to invade and divide the country. Moreover, historical and structural reasons have so far prevented the emergence of a party based on anti-immigration. However, it can be safely asserted that the conditions are now there for the emergence of *a new politics of anti-immigration* inflating the problems and exploiting the presence of migrant workers in Cyprus. The so-called ‘numbers game’ regarding the presence of migrants in Cyprus has led to the racialisation of migrant workers:<sup>34</sup> in June 2000 the headline popular paper (considered to be a ‘quality broadsheet’) was “20000 foreign workers in Cyprus”.<sup>35</sup> The phenomenon is primarily media-driven and stirred up by a handful of populist politicians and some right-wing trade unionists.<sup>36</sup> The party systems in both sectors of the divided society, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot political parties, are still primarily organised around the Cyprus problem and local issues; immigration is an issue, but political parties do not have clear policies that may define in a definitively way a political cleavage. As argued elsewhere, the emergence of a new ‘family’ of extreme right-wing / populist parties based on anti-immigration during the last two decades had not made its appearance, at least so far in Cyprus but there are far right parties which are nationalist and anti-Turkish in the

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<sup>30</sup> The relevant section the website of the Greek Neo-Nazi group *Χρυσή Αυγή* in reads as follows: “We have to stress that for the first time in the history of the suffering large Greek island of Cyprus there is participation of a clear nationalist ballot paper; the ballot paper of the National Popular Front (ELAM). Our fellow fighters in Cyprus gave a wonderful struggle and have our warm wishes”, see <http://xryshaygh.wordpress.com/europe09/> (24.07.2009).

<sup>31</sup> See M. Droussiotis (1994), *Από το Εθνικό Μέτωπο στην ΕΟΚΑ Β*, Nicosia; also see M. Droussiotis (2002) *ΕΟΚΑ Β & CIA, το ελληνοτουρκικό παρακράτος της Κύπρου*, Alfadi, Nicosia.

<sup>32</sup> See M. Droussiotis, A. Ann, D. Fernandes, I. Ozdem (2004) *Το Βαθύ Κράτος, Τουρκία-Ελλάδα-Κύπρος*, Alfadi, Nicosia; also see M. Droussiotis (2002) *ΕΟΚΑ Β & CIA, το ελληνοτουρκικό παρακράτος της Κύπρου*, Alfadi, Nicosia.

<sup>33</sup> C. Mavratsas (1998) *Όψεις του Ελληνικού Εθνικισμού Κύπρου*, Katarti, Athens; N. Kızılyürek (1999) *Κύπρος: Το Αδιέξοδο των Εθνικισμών*, Mavri Lista, Athens.

<sup>34</sup> See N. Trimikliniotis (1999) ‘New Migration and Racism in Cyprus: The Racialisation of Migrant Workers’, in: F. Anthias and G. Lazaridis (ed.) *Into the Margins: Migration and Exclusion in Southern Europe*, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 139-179; N. Trimikliniotis and C. Demetriou (2007) ‘Cyprus’, in: A. Triandafyllidou & R. Gropas (ed.) *European Immigration: A sourcebook*, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 45-58.

<sup>35</sup> M. Hadjivassilis (2009) ‘200.000 ξένοι εργάτες’, in: *Φιλελεύθερος* (18.06.2009), p.1.

<sup>36</sup> N. Trimikliniotis (2005) ‘Socio-political Developments and Impacts - Cyprus Report’, Work Package 5, *The European Dilemma: Institutional Patterns and Politics of 'Racial' Discrimination, A Comparative study including 8 European countries including Cyprus*, Intercollege, Research Project Xenophob, EU Fifth Framework Program 2002-2005.

Greek-Cypriot dominated sector and nationalist / anti-Greek in the Turkish-Cypriots dominated north.<sup>37</sup>

2.2.3 The second novelty of the elections, which directly relates to anti-immigration politics, is that one of the smaller parties, namely EVROKO,<sup>38</sup> did attempt to play the racist card by using the anti-immigrant xenophobic slogans but was strongly criticised by some articles in the press.<sup>39</sup> Presumably, EVROKO was trying to tap in a section of the Greek-Cypriot population that entertains phobias about migrants and general 'demographic concerns'. The emergence of an organised racist lobby around certain organisations with anti-immigration and xenophobic agenda has made its appearance recently. There a number of publications and regular media discourses about the imminent and grave 'dangers' from 'Afro-asiatic', 'Muslim-Asiatic' and 'Turko-asiatic' hordes that are ready to invade Cyprus as part of a plan orchestrated by Turkey to change the demographic character of Cyprus through illegal immigration; they also circulated a leaflet to this effect.<sup>40</sup> Studies have shown that there are regular media discourses employing the usual racist fames that can be compared to the other EU countries such as ethno-nationalistic, conflict-criminality, welfare-chauvinist, job-stealing, 'threat to liberal norms', biological racism and national specific frames.<sup>41</sup>

2.2.4 With regard to the main discussion lines and arguments of the debate, ELAM produces the usual racist slogans contained in the Greek neo-Nazi and extreme Right papers and magazines,<sup>42</sup> claiming that it is the only party that speaks of "liberation of our enslaved lands, the ending of the privileges of the 'greedy' Turkish-Cypriots and for a Europe of Nations, traditions, which belongs to the real Europeans and not to the 'third-worldly' [backward] illegal immigrants".<sup>43</sup> EVROKO took a similar line but in a softer tone; it raised the fear that Cypriots 'are becoming a minority in [their] own country' as a result of [the Government] 'accepting the presence of 50,000 settlers'

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<sup>37</sup> N. Trimikliniotis (2005) 'Socio-political Developments and Impacts - Cyprus Report', Work Package 5, *The European Dilemma: Institutional Patterns and Politics of 'Racial' Discrimination, A Comparative study including 8 European countries including Cyprus*, Intercollege, Research Project Xenophob, EU Fifth Framework Program 2002-2005.

<sup>38</sup> The developed out of a merger between splinter groups from the mainstream party of the conservative DESY and other right-wing groupings, such as NEOI ORIZONTES, which itself derived the far right student groupings of the 1970s and 1980s. For more on the Greek-Cypriot party system, see C. Christoforou (2009) 'The Evolution of Greek Cypriot Party Politics', in: J. Ker-Lindsay & H. Faustmann (ed.) *The Government and Politics of Cyprus*, Oxford: Peter Land, p.83-106.

<sup>39</sup> N. Kyriakou (2009) 'Ακροδεξιές μειονότητες', in: *Πολίτης* (31.05.2009), p.12; D. Dionisiou, (2009) 'Στρουθοκαμηλισμός', in: *Πολίτης* (24.05.2009).

<sup>40</sup> For instance in July 2008 the two organisations called 'Movement for the Salvation of Cyprus' and 'Movement for a European Future of Cyprus' announced their intention to hold a public meeting to summon support for their fight against the above 'dangers'. The announcement, which claimed that the keynote speaker would be the Chief of Police, prompted the public to attend the meeting en mass. Complaints were filed with the Cyprus Equality Body (Ombudsman) against the two organising NGOs for violation of the constitutional equality and anti-discrimination principle and for stirring up racial hatred contrary to the criminal code. No action was taken by the prosecution authorities against the organisers for dissemination of racist material.

<sup>41</sup> N. Trimikliniotis (2005) 'Socio-political Developments and Impacts - Cyprus Report', Work Package 5, *The European Dilemma: Institutional Patterns and Politics of 'Racial' Discrimination, A Comparative study including 8 European countries including Cyprus*, Intercollege, Research Project Xenophob, EU Fifth Framework Program 2002-2005.

<sup>42</sup> It is a mixture of the neo-Nazi magazines and newspapers *ΣΤΟΧΟΣ*, *Χρυσή Αυγή*, *Απολλώνιο Φως* and the extreme Right magazines such as *Πεσάλτο* and nationalist/ anti-Turkish magazines such as *ΕΛΛΟΠΙΑ* etc.

<sup>43</sup> Our translation from the section of the website that refers to the ideology of the party, <http://ethnikolaikometwpo.blogspot.com/2009/06/2009.html> (22.07.2009).

from Turkey, a matter which they linked to the question of migration. One commentator criticised EVROKO's immigration discourses for being based on the assumptions and disseminating the ideas via its slogans that there is "unchecked employment of illegal aliens and the uncertain future for work of Cypriots, the increase of the illegal immigrants and the accentuation of violence and criminality."<sup>44</sup> It was argued there that EVROKO must be considered as a "an extreme Right minority" in Cypriot society, which "transmits a racist, xenophobic and far right message" and is the equivalent to other far Right parties such as the Nationalist Popular Party (SVP) in Switzerland, the Austrian far Right and the Greek LA.OS.<sup>45</sup> In fact from the outset of the campaign, the party leader, during his speech to party activists to kick off the party campaign, situated what he referred to as "the issue of the migrants" next to other problems such as the economic crisis, unemployment, uncertainty in employment, insecurity etc and referred to these as the most important issues that concern Cypriot citizens; EVROKO would be a militant force guarding against such problems.<sup>46</sup> The party was criticised in the press for adopting racist and xenophobic agenda against migrants but failed to respond to the criticisms. One article complained the party leader "attacked foreigners who are working in Cyprus on the cheap accusing them of stealing jobs from Cypriots and are responsible for increasing unemployment" and posed the following question: "Had Mr. Syllouris read a little history, perhaps he would have discovered that it was with the same line of arguments Adolf Hitler exterminated the Jews, the Poles, the Gypsies, the mentally deprived and the homosexuals in Nazi Germany; after this racist ejaculation, we wonder how many of our compatriots will vote for EVROKO."<sup>47</sup>

- 2.2.5 The main actors were the leadership of EVROKO, particularly the leader D. Syllouris and the MEP candidates of this party, as well as various media promoting such ideas (e.g. ANTENA TV). These arguments were criticised primarily in the newspaper *Politis*, which may possibly account for the fact that EVROKO did not vigorously pursue this line of argument until the end.
- 2.2.6 The debate was not central/intensive, but it certainly attracted more attention when compared to other debates.
- 2.2.7 The debate stopped after the EU elections. There was no reference to the issue after the elections.

### 2.3 The role of the church, religion and funding in elections - The Pitsillides phenomenon

- 2.3.1 Media attention was drawn by one DISY candidate, a young Greek Orthodox theologian, Andreas Pitsillides, who first appeared in the public scene as TV spokesman for the Bishop of Kykkou, who was contenting the 2006 the archbishopric elections. Media attention was drawn firstly due to his extravagant media campaign (regular spots on television, in giant posters and newspaper adverts), which raised questions about the funding he had received from the church and other donors. Whether he is "rising star" or "one-month wonder,"<sup>48</sup> Pitsillides became "a major

<sup>44</sup> N. Kyriakou (2009) 'Ακροδεξιές μειονότητες', in: *Πολίτης* 31.05.2009), p.12.

<sup>45</sup> N. Kyriakou (2009) 'Ακροδεξιές μειονότητες', in: *Πολίτης* (31.05.2009), p.12.

<sup>46</sup> This took place on 12.04.2009 at the hotel Holiday Inn and is posted on the party's official website [http://www.evropaikokomma.org/main/1\\_0\\_348\\_166-ΠΑΓΚΥΠΡΙΑ-ΠΡΟΕΚΛΟΓΙΚΗ-ΣΥΓΚΕΝΤΡΩΣΗ-12-ΑΠΡΙΛΙΟΥ-2009--ΞΕΝΟΔΟΧΕΙΟ-HOLIDAY-INN-ΛΕΥΚΩΣΙΑ-ΟΜΙΛΙΑ-ΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΥ-ΤΟΥ-ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟΥ-ΚΟΜΜΑΤΟΣ-κ-ΔΗΜΗΤΡΗ-ΣΥΛΛΟΥΡΗ.aspx](http://www.evropaikokomma.org/main/1_0_348_166-ΠΑΓΚΥΠΡΙΑ-ΠΡΟΕΚΛΟΓΙΚΗ-ΣΥΓΚΕΝΤΡΩΣΗ-12-ΑΠΡΙΛΙΟΥ-2009--ΞΕΝΟΔΟΧΕΙΟ-HOLIDAY-INN-ΛΕΥΚΩΣΙΑ-ΟΜΙΛΙΑ-ΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΥ-ΤΟΥ-ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟΥ-ΚΟΜΜΑΤΟΣ-κ-ΔΗΜΗΤΡΗ-ΣΥΛΛΟΥΡΗ.aspx) (22.07.2009)

<sup>47</sup> D. Dionisiou, (2009) 'Στρουθοκαμηλισμός', in: *Πολίτης* (24.05.2009).

<sup>48</sup> S. Evripidou (2009) 'Rising star or one-month wonder?', in: *Cyprus Mail* (03.07.2009).

talking point” because of his extravagant campaign and exposure as “the image of the candidate looms everywhere, and is especially visible in Nicosia, drawing all kinds of attention”.<sup>49</sup> In fact, “according to one DISY insider”, he had “got more ad-boards than all the MEP candidates in Cyprus put together”.<sup>50</sup> We are informed by “sources [who] told the Sunday Mail that the candidate’s campaign expenses could be running in the hundreds of thousands of euros” but “Pitsillides himself has denied being funded by the ultra-wealthy bishopric of Kykkos, of which he is a former employee.”<sup>51</sup> According to the law MEP candidates are allowed to pay a maximum of €50,000 personal expenses for their campaign. However, according to the Cyprus Mail “a conservative estimate for one board is around €1,000” and “with over 100 boards, the campaign cost for the rising star should normally exceed the 50,000euro cap on expenses.”<sup>52</sup> The candidate bypassed law by claiming the following: “I have spent a total of 50,000 euro. It’s not my money but my sponsors. The law says the personal limit is 50,000 euro, but sponsors can spend more” and that “during a crisis you can get better deals. One company are family friends and gave me the ads completely free while the other two gave me very cheap packages.” Pitsillides claimed that he did not receive one cent from Kykkos.<sup>53</sup> Incredibly, he claimed that as a theologian he had assisted various rich persons who had ‘personal’ and ‘social problems’, who funded him, and offered to provide a list of his funders but failed to do so in the end: this caused considerable amazement and debate in the press and media.<sup>54</sup>

2.3.2 Secondly, he was criticised for his populist anti-Left stance in TV election debates, where he denied the right of persons of Left political persuasions to contest democratic elections; his own party leader stated that he stepped out of line. Commentators referred to ‘the Pitsillides phenomenon’ as a media-generated distortion in modern politics resulting from bad funding regulation, the involvement of the church in funding and promoting candidates and problematic selection processes within political parties.<sup>55</sup>

2.3.3 As one commentary notes: “A major talking point is the exposure given to DISY candidate Andreas Pitsillides, a young theologian-turned politician. The image of the candidate looms everywhere, and is especially visible in Nicosia, drawing all kinds of attention.”<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the newspaper citing its’ own sources “the candidate’s campaign expenses could be running in the hundreds of thousands of euros. Pitsillides himself has denied being funded by the ultra-wealthy bishopric of Kykkos, of which he is a former employee.”<sup>57</sup> In a chat show Pitsillides said that AKEL was a “cancerous cell” (i.e. something that needs to be ‘amputated’ or surgically removed for the good of the organism), a matter that sparked a heated exchange between AKEL and its’ news paper Haravgi versus Pitsillides.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>49</sup> E. Hazou (2009) ‘Where’s Europe in our Euro elections?’, in: *Cyprus Mail* ( 31.5.2009).

<sup>50</sup> S. Evripidou (2009) ‘Rising star or one-month wonder?’, in: *Cyprus Mail* (03.07.2009).

<sup>51</sup> E. Hazou (2009) ‘Where’s Europe in our Euro elections?’, in: *Cyprus Mail* ( 31.5.2009).

<sup>52</sup> S. Evripidou (2009) ‘Rising star or one-month wonder?’, in: *Cyprus Mail* (03.07.2009).

<sup>53</sup> S. Evripidou (2009) ‘Rising star or one-month wonder?’, in: *Cyprus Mail* (03.07.2009).

<sup>54</sup> He said this during a debate n ASTRA Radio and received criticisms in various newspapers - see C. Constantinou (2009) ‘«Κοσμικές» στα πρόθυρα νευρικής κρίσης’, in: *Politis*, <http://www.Politis-news.com/cgi-bin/hweb?-A=872933&-V=archivecolumns>

<sup>55</sup> He said this during a debate n ASTRA Radio and received criticisms in various newspapers - see C. Constantinou (2009) ‘«Κοσμικές» στα πρόθυρα νευρικής κρίσης’, in: *Politis* (21.05.2009), <http://www.Politis-news.com/cgi-bin/hweb?-A=872933&-V=archivecolumns>

<sup>56</sup> E. Hazou (2009) ‘Where’s Europe in our Euro elections?, In: *Cyprus Mail* (31.05. 2009).

<sup>57</sup> E. Hazou (2009) ‘Where’s Europe in our Euro elections?, In: *Cyprus Mail* (31.05. 2009).

<sup>58</sup> See C. Constantinou (2009) ‘Κατά Βαρβάρων, Τελικά υπάρχει 'Αγιος. Ένας τουλάχιστον...’, in: *Πολίτης*, <http://www.Politis-news.com/cgi-bin/hweb?-A=877013&-V=archivecolumns> (22.07.2009); C.



- 2.3.4 The main actors involved in the debate were: A. Pitsillides and the leader of AKEL, A. Kyprianou, journalists from different TV channels, radio and the press, particularly from Haravgi, Politis and the Cyprus Mail.
- 2.3.5 How central/intensive was The debate in the media compared to other debates related to the 2009 EU elections was quite intensive but the issues around funding, the role of the charge and use of religion to get votes were somehow subsumed in issues relating to the flamboyant personality and spin methods of Pitsillides.
- 2.3.6 The debate completely stopped after the EU elections. Pitsillides was not elected but did considerably well in the elections for a newcomer in politics, receiving 18,687 votes.<sup>59</sup>

## 2.4 Gender issues and participation of women

- 2.4.1 The gender issues and particularly the question of gender representation, in the European Parliamentary elections was raised in the debates, but it was not a prominent issue: gender was not in focus in the electoral campaign but was raised by some women's and human rights organisations and by a few of the women candidates. General gender issues were marginally raised, which was an issue some women's and human rights organisations complained during and after the election campaign.<sup>60</sup> Women in Cypriot society are under-represented in the high echelons of power and there have been various calls for action to this front.<sup>61</sup> Gender participation in the EU Parliament was an issue of embarrassment, given that in the first elections there was no representation of women at all. The presence of prominent female candidates from the three largest parties, did put to test the question of female representation in the European Parliament: two women out of the six Cypriot MEPs were elected (Eleni Theocharous, who is MEP for DISY and Antigoni Papadopoulou, who is MEP for DIKO) and third lost by a close margin (Skevi Koukouma, MEP candidate for AKEL). Also the Green Party recently elected leader a dynamic woman, Ioanna Panayiotou, who had a good campaign and did put some gender issues on the agenda; in fact four out of six candidate MEPs were women.<sup>62</sup>
- 2.4.2 Different discussion lines and arguments were raised in the debate depending on the position of the various actors. A representative of the European Women's Lobby in Cyprus argues in that gender equality can be promoted by supporting those candidates in the European Member of Parliament support gender rights but complained that "these gender equality issues have not be in any pre-election debates or featured highly in the pre-election programmes of any of the candidates", based a European Women's Lobby (EWL) General Audit Report published in light of the June elections confirmed that two out of four main European political parties' electoral manifestos do not consider gender equality a priority, she said.<sup>63</sup> Another organisation called on the electorate to trust women as representatives in various elected posts. The under-representation of women in the echelons of society was raised by Cyprus Equality Observatory (PIK) Παρατηρητήριο Ισότητας Κύπρου

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Constantinou (2009) 'Πλούσιοι επώχευσαν και επείνασαν...' , in: *Politis* (17.06.2009), <http://www.politis-news.com/cgi-bin/hweb?-A> (22.07.2009)

<sup>59</sup> He actually came fourth in his party: Kasoulides received 69.576, Theocharous 58.596, who were elected, followed by Stylianides 34.123, Pitsillides 18.687, Fokaides 8.785 and Efthymiou 4.131.

<sup>60</sup> See Women's Lobby (Cyprus branch) announcement

<sup>61</sup> See for instance A. Strand (2009) 'The Smaller Issues Complicating the Larger Picture', *The Cyprus Review*, 21 1, pp.187-192.

<sup>62</sup>B. Browne (2009) 'Women leading the pack in Green Party', in: *Cyprus Mail* (04.04.2009).

<sup>63</sup> Saoulli, A. (2009) 'Support gender rights with your MEP vote', in: *Cyprus Mail* (24.05.2009).

(ΠΙΚ), which presented figures that illustrate the under-representation in Cyprus: in EU national parliaments the ratio of women was 16 percent in 1997 and 24 percent in 2007, which remains below target of 30 percent; Cyprus is one of seven countries with a percentage below 15 percent.<sup>64</sup> In 2004 in the European Parliament it was 31 percent but with no women Cypriot MEPs, which reflects the general under-representation of women in Cypriot institutions: 14,4 percent in Parliament, στο 21 percent in business, στο 18 percent in high managerial positions; 19 percent in local government; one woman in a Ministerial Council consisting of 11 ministers.<sup>65</sup> In one commentary immediately after the elections under the subheading “a Woman’s case”, noted that in the 2004 elections no women were elected. It was argued that in an election with 47 candidates out of whom only 10 were women the apparent election of three<sup>66</sup> women cannot be considered a victory for women, given that the three women expected to become MEPs were the only women candidates from their parties.<sup>67</sup> This is slightly inaccurate as there was another female candidate for DIKO Elena Tanou, but the spirit of what commentator is correct, given that Tanou as a young and unknown candidate had no real chance getting elected; A. Papadopoulou was a hot favourite, in that sense the only real female contender. On the few issues that would have a wide impact on women in Cyprus, particularly those of the subaltern classes the call of the extension maternity leave from 16 to 24 week, which is based on the Estrela report,<sup>68</sup> on the occasion of Mother’s Day but chose not to integrate it in the electoral campaign.<sup>69</sup> From the female candidates, Eleni Theocharous (in the end elected MEP for DISY) stated that she opposed to women’s quotas because this will bring votes on the basis of good will of men and that women who deserve to be elected will do so, irrespective of being a woman or a man.<sup>70</sup> Also, Elena Tanou, candidate for DIKO, argued that women in Europe do not have the same benefits as men and that there is variance about the rights of women between different EU countries. She said that would give high priority to “women’s issues” in terms of employment and education, but did not reveal anything specific about her program or how she will go about doing it.<sup>71</sup>

2.4.3 Main Actors: Eleni Theocharous, Antigoni Papadopoulou, Skevi Koukouma, Elena Tanou, Ioanna Panayiotou (candidates women MEPs), and some women’s organizations such as MIGS, PIK and journalists from the *Cyprus Mail* and *Politis* newspaper and journal *Sihroni Apopsi*.

2.4.4 The debate in the media was not central or in any way intensive when compared to other debates related to the 2009 EU elections. Since her election as MEP, Antigoni Papadopoulou, who had served as President of the women’s Group of DIKO, has expressed an interest in following the work of Equal opportunities between men and

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<sup>64</sup> The others are the Czech Republic, Ireland, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania and Malta.

<sup>65</sup> Unsigned (2009) ‘Χαμηλό το ποσοστό της εκπροσώπησης γυναικών- Το Παρατηρητήριο καλεί τους Κύπριους να εμπιστευθούν γυναίκες’, in: *Φιλελεύθερος* (29.05.2009).

<sup>66</sup> At that point it seems more likely that Skevi Koukouma would be elected for AKEL; in the end she lost by a small margin to the sitting MEP, Kyriakos Triantafyllides, who was re-elected.

<sup>67</sup> K. Savva (2009) ‘Επικράτησαν οι υποψήφιοι του στενού κομματικού πυρήνα’, in: *Πολίτης* (07.06.2009), p. 6

<sup>68</sup> Report presented by the Greens at the European Parliament on maternity issues, discussion for which was postponed.

<sup>69</sup> Unsigned (2009) ‘Κίνημα Οικολόγων, Άδεια μητρότητας 24 εβδομάδων’, in: *Πολίτης* (11.05.2009), p.6.

<sup>70</sup> C. Ioannou (2009) ‘Συνέντευξη Ελένης Θεοχάρους «Ο όρκος της ζωής μου...»’, in: *Σύγχρονη Άποψη*, <http://www.apopsi.com.cy/2009/05/1644> (22.07.2009).

<sup>71</sup> C. Georgiou (2009) ‘Έλενα Τάνου: Υποψήφια για την Ευρωβουλή με το ΔΗΚΟ, Το εθνικό είναι και ευρωπαϊκό’, in: *Πολίτης* – (24.05.2009), p. 44.

women Committee of the European Parliament.<sup>72</sup> Having said that, it is said in the journalistic world that Eleni Theocharous, who was elected MEP for DISY made it a condition that she would only stand if she is the only woman candidate, so as to muster the female votes and thus excluding other female candidates interested.<sup>73</sup> The smaller parties who had no chance of electing an MEP had more women MEP candidates, the Green party being the typical example. The larger parties whose women candidates had a good chance of getting elected featured only one woman candidate; this may be interpreted as the result of pressure from the single woman candidate on the party to be the only female candidate nominated, so that women's votes are not divided, ensuring overwhelming success at the elections.

2.4.5 The debate stopped after the EU elections.

## **2.5 The non-participation of Turkish-Cypriots and the right to elect their representatives from a separate electoral list as provided for elections**

2.5.1 The first time since 1964 that Turkish-Cypriots were allowed to vote was in the European Parliamentary elections of 2004, after a successful challenge by a Turkish-Cypriot against the Republic of Cyprus in the European Court of Human Rights, the case of *Aziz v. the Republic of Cyprus*.<sup>74</sup> The Court found the Cypriot government to be in violation of Article 3, Protocol 1 of the ECHR for denying the applicant "the very essence of the right to vote" and of Article 14 of the same Convention. Following this decision, on 25.11.2004 a new law was passed providing for the right to vote and be elected in elections for Turkish-Cypriots who reside in the Republic-controlled south, except for the right to be elected as president. The law covers only a few hundred of Turkish-Cypriots who reside in the Greek-Cypriot controlled south of the country but the vast majority of Turkish Cypriots who reside in the north or abroad would continue to be denied the right to vote and be elected. In the case of the European Parliamentary Elections it was allowed for Turkish-Cypriots to vote by using their identity cards. However, the main Turkish-Cypriots political parties in the northern part of the country opposed the new law as a violation of the basic tenet of the Cypriot constitution that demands that there is a separate list for the two communities of Cyprus, the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots; in any case they question the legitimacy of the Republic of Cyprus since 1964. In 2004 there were two Turkish-Cypriots candidates and only a few hundred of Turkish-Cypriots exercised their right to vote. In 2009 there were no Turkish-Cypriots candidates: some 1,305 registered Turkish Cypriot voters living in the south.<sup>75</sup> The fact that only a few Turkish-Cypriots reside in the south and about 5000 work in the south is an issue that had some impact, but remained marginal as a human right issue in the area under the control of the (Greek-Cypriot dominated) Republic of Cyprus. This is

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<sup>72</sup>S. Michail (2009) 'Θα διεκδικώ πάντα τα δίκαια της Κύπρου και του λαού της, συνέντευξη της Αντιγόνης Παπαδοπούλου', in: *Φιλελεύθερος* (12.07.2009)

<sup>73</sup> Information provided to the researcher by a journalist who has followed her campaign closely and knows the insight of the DISY party.

<sup>74</sup> European Court of Human Rights Application No. 69949/01, <http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2004/June/ChamberJudgmentAzizvCyprus220604.htm> (24.07.09). The applicant applied to the ECtHR for violation of his right to vote, based on Articles 3 and 14 of Protocol No. 1 of the ECHR, following a Supreme Court decision denying him the right to be registered in the electoral roll on the ground that, under the Constitution, Turkish-Cypriots had to be registered in a separate electoral roll. The Turkish electoral roll had in practice been abolished since 1963.

<sup>75</sup>[http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article\\_1481723.php/Cypriots\\_begin\\_voting\\_in\\_European\\_Parliament\\_elections\\_#ixzz0MRqZsaZ2](http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article_1481723.php/Cypriots_begin_voting_in_European_Parliament_elections_#ixzz0MRqZsaZ2)

connected to the ongoing de facto division of the country and the negotiations currently taking place to reunify the country.

- 2.5.2 The low participation of Turkish-Cypriots was marginally reported as matter of factual reporting in the Greek-Cypriot press;<sup>76</sup> but the general issue of the right of Turkish-Cypriots to elect their representatives from a separate electoral list as provided for elections in the Cypriot constitution was an issue that was prominent in the Turkish-Cypriot media in the northern part of Cyprus and the diaspora Turkish-Cypriots press.<sup>77</sup> The main argument reported in the Greek-Cypriot press was that the Turkish-Cypriots in London are taking the case to the ECJ to annul the election results.<sup>78</sup>
- 2.5.3 The main actors have been Turkish-Cypriot press and media, London-based Turkish-Cypriot politicians who applied to the ECJ to annul the Cypriot European Parliamentary Elections such as M. Bayramoglu and Munir Tatar. Also *Politis* newspaper reported the matter.
- 2.5.4 This was not a central issue in the debate. The debate has stopped after the EU elections and is subsumed in the general question of resolution of the Cyprus problem, as there are negotiations taking place at the moment.

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<sup>76</sup> Unsigned (2009) ‘T/K ζητούν την ακύρωση των ευρωεκλογών, Νέα προσφυγή στο ΔΕΚ’, in: *Πολίτης* (26.05.2009), p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> See Fatih Cansiz (2009) ‘Bayramoglu plea for Turkish Cypriot Representation in the EU Parliament’, in: *Londra Gazette* [http://www.londragazete.com/haber\\_detay.asp?haberID=3487](http://www.londragazete.com/haber_detay.asp?haberID=3487) (24.07.2009)

<sup>78</sup> Unsigned (2009) ‘T/K ζητούν την ακύρωση των ευρωεκλογών, Νέα προσφυγή στο ΔΕΚ’, in: *Πολίτης* (26.05.2009), p. 6.



### **3. Annex**

Provide a list of the media you searched.

**Newspapers: The distinction between ‘broadsheet’ and ‘tabloid’ does not exist in Cyprus**

1. *Φιλελεύθερος [Philelftheros]*
2. *Πολίτης [Politis]*
3. *Χαραυγή [Haravgi]*
4. *Cyprus Mail*

**Journals: we only have monthly journals in Cyprus**

*Σύγχρονη Άποψη [Modern Perspective / Opinion]* <http://www.apopsi.com.cy>

**Table 2: Results of the EP Elections of 2004 and 2009 and the Parliamentary Elections of 2006 (number of seats in brackets)\***

The following table is from G. Charalambous (2009) *European Parliament Election Briefing No 34, the June 2009 European Elections in the Republic of Cyprus*, available at:

[http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no\\_34\\_epern-ep09-cyprus.pdf](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no_34_epern-ep09-cyprus.pdf) (22.07.2009).

Party	European Elections 2009 Results	Parliamentary Elections 2006 Results	European Election 2004 Results
AKEL	35.90% (2)	31.13% (18)	27.89% (2)
Democratic Rally	35.65% (2)	30.34% (18)	28.23% (2)
Democratic Party	12.28% (1)	17.92% (11)	17.09% (1)
Social Democratic Movement	9.85% (1)	8.91% (5)	10.79% (0)
European Party**	4.12% (0)	5.75% (3)	12.45% (1)
Ecologists/Environment alists	1.50% (0)	1.95% (0)	0.86% (0)
Others/ independents	1.69% (0)	12.09% (0)	5.20% (0)
Total	(6)	(56)	(6)
Turnout	59.40%	89.0%	72.50%

\*Thirty-three polling stations were set abroad. Results include those polls as well.

\*\* In the 2004 European elections the result of the European Party is actually that of the formation 'For Europe', which later joined with the party New Horizons to form the European Party.

Source: Compiled from [www.moi.gov.cy](http://www.moi.gov.cy) (National Elections Service)