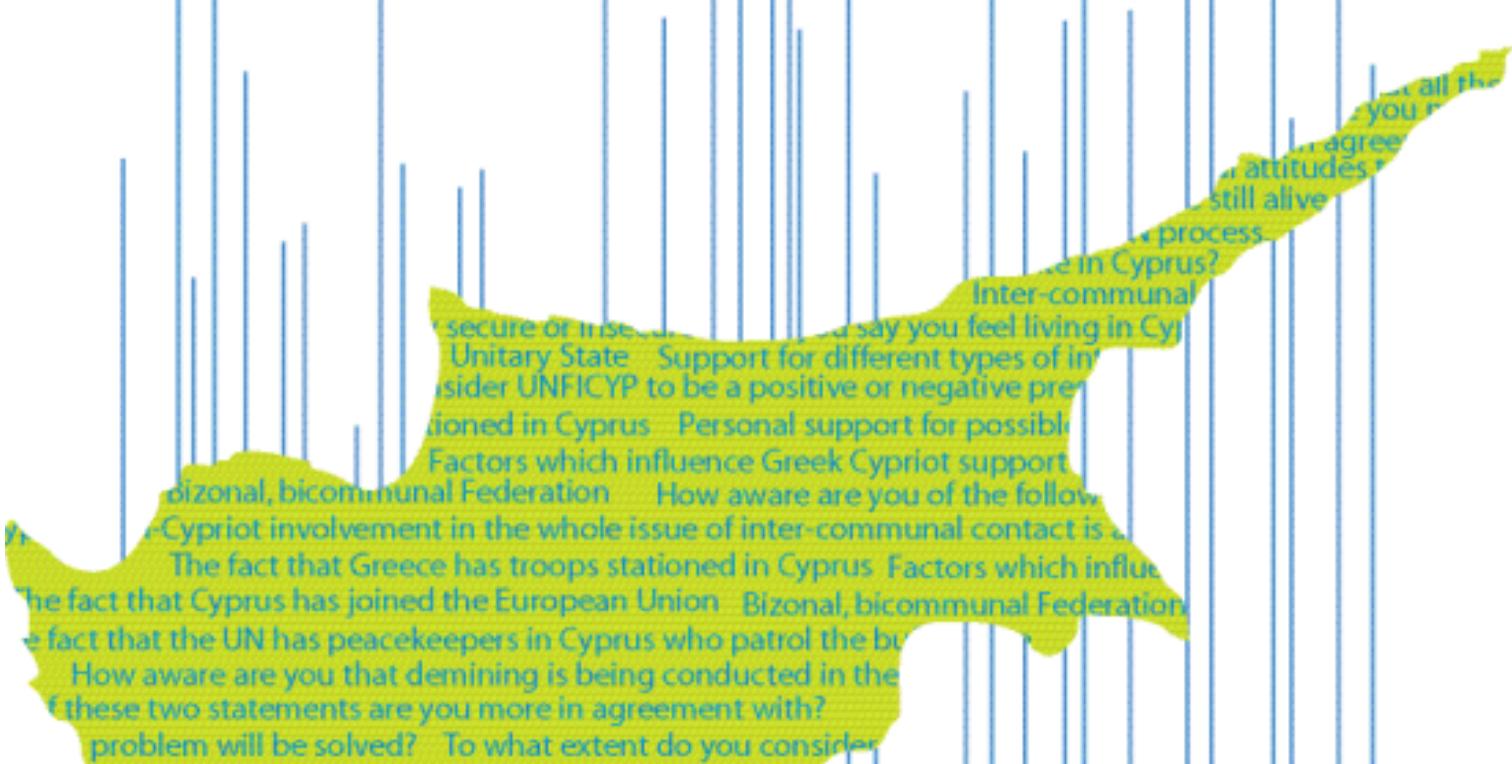


# The Blue Beret

## The UN in Cyprus

### An Inter-communal Survey



Special Edition  
April 2007

# The UN in Cyprus

## An inter-communal public opinion poll by UNFICYP



In January and February of 2007, an island-wide poll, commissioned by UNFICYP, was conducted with a sample of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. In addition, a special sample of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, all resident within the UN buffer zone, was selected for comparison with the general population.

For purposes of this project, UNFICYP retained the services of a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot expert consultant, Alexandros Lordos and Erol Kaymak respectively, whose task it was to assist

with the preparation of the questionnaire and interpretation of the results. In addition, two well-established polling companies, CYMAR Market Research and Prologue Consulting, were selected through a tendering process to carry out the fieldwork.

All three UNFICYP pillars – the UN Police, Civil Affairs, and Military – as well as the office of the Chief of Mission contributed to the survey design. In addition to UNFICYP, other UN agencies currently operating in Cyprus participated in the survey –

specifically, the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP), the UNDP-PFF Mine Action Centre (UNMAC), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme-Action for Co-operation and Trust (UNDP-ACT), and the United Nations Development Programme - Partnership for the Future (UNDP-PFF).

UNFICYP decided to commission this project in order to evaluate the effectiveness and ongoing relevance of its work in Cyprus.

Commissioned to evaluate UNFICYP's effectiveness and ongoing relevance after 43 years on the island, the survey comprised face-to-face, detailed interviews with 1,000 Greek Cypriots and 1,000 Turkish Cypriots in their respective languages.

As to the specifics of the UN presence in Cyprus, the survey results show the public to be most aware of UNFICYP, the Demining Project (UNMAC), and the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP).

An additional sample of 350 was selected from among UN buffer zone residents to help determine attitudes to UN activities in that area.

While majorities in both communities are aware of UNFICYP's presence and role, Greek Cypriots are likely to be more familiar with its activities than Turkish Cypriots. A majority in both communities view UNFICYP's presence on the island as a positive. Both view as negative any withdrawal scenario involving UNFICYP's departure before restoration of normal conditions and a settlement.

Each community derives its

Majorities in both communities consider that the United Nations has an important role to play in Cyprus and that its presence on the island is essential, according to the UNFICYP-commissioned survey.

At the same time, a majority of Greek Cypriots believes that the UN is biased in favour of Turkish Cypriots while, conversely, Turkish Cypriots believe it is similarly biased in favour of Greek Cypriots. In both communities, a majority view suggests that the UN needs to make a stronger effort to reach out and understand the concerns of the wider Cypriot public.

primary sense of security from its unilateral arrangements for military security, with the UN Peacekeeping Force seen in a secondary role. However, the survey response shows that the UN Peacekeeping Force is the only military force on the island that simultaneously enhances the sense of security of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The survey also shows that most Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are aware of the UN

buffer zone's basic purpose and of the regulations and limitations regarding its use. Large majorities in both communities would like to see greater use made of it for mutual benefit projects that would enhance contact between them. They also favour designating areas of the buffer zone as environmental parks and feel buffer zone landowners should be granted more freedom in terms of land use. However, a majority in both

communities holds that the UN should do more to understand Cypriot concerns and would welcome closer contact between the UN and the public. Examples of how this could be done include outreach programmes to villages and towns, in-depth research into Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot concerns, an interactive website promoting inter-communal dialogue or a publication dealing with the peace process translated into Turkish and Greek.

## Inter-communal relationships can pave the way for improved levels of trust between the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots

Large majorities in both communities are convinced that day-to-day bicultural contact is essential to pave the way for a united Cyprus and there is approval for those who reach out to the other community through such contacts. This goodwill notwithstanding, only a small percentage of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots interact with one another in a bicultural context despite evidence that such contacts increase levels of trust towards members of the other community.

Even though both communities generally accept and acknowledge the merits and benefits of inter-communal contact, there is great sensitivity over the extent to which non-Cypriot intermediaries should get involved in facilitating and promoting such activities. While "assistance by the UN or others" is seen as potentially helpful, the overall message from survey respondents is that non-Cypriot intermediaries should maintain a delicate balance by "assisting and facilitating" while avoiding any perception of "interfering and meddling".

Of various possible types of inter-communal contact, the most acceptable to both communities is environmental cooperation by Greek Cypriot and

Turkish Cypriot non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and also, joint research projects by Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot academics working together.

Both communities view the work of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) and the Mine Action Centre (MAC) as making significant contributions to confidence-building measures.

Large majorities – 90% among Greek Cypriots, 75% among Turkish Cypriots – approve the work of the CMP. Among Greek Cypriots, almost everyone (96% of those interviewed) is aware of the CMP's recent exhumation activities, while the awareness level among Turkish Cypriots is 66%. Almost all Greek Cypriots and a strong majority of Turkish Cypriots believe that the exhumation and identification of remains is an essential process that must be completed before the issue of Missing Persons can be resolved.

On the demining front, both communities acknowledge and appreciate the MAC's mine clearance activities in the buffer zone and concur that minefields are a leftover from the past that must be removed. Not everyone is aware of the Ottawa Treaty and its signatories' obligation to remove anti-personnel mines but

most realize that removal of minefields frees land for farming use and helps pave the way for the opening of further crossing points.

However, the confidence-boosting impact of crossing points is less evident. Only 10% of Greek Cypriots cross with any regularity compared to 45% of Turkish Cypriots. According to the survey, of those Greek Cypriots who only crossed a few initial times following the opening of the crossings, most report that the experience had not enhanced their impression of their Turkish Cypriot neighbours.

About 40% of Greek Cypriots indicate they have never crossed to the north since the opening of the first crossing point in 2003. Some 50% say that after one or a few initial crossings, they no longer do so. About 10% of Greek Cypriots continue to cross the checkpoints with any frequency.

Among Turkish Cypriots, about 30% have never crossed. About 25% have crossed once or occasionally, but not any more. Some 45% of Turkish Cypriots still cross with greater or lesser frequency.

Most Turkish Cypriots report their opinions of Greek Cypriots remained unchanged as a result of crossing. Of those whose opinions did change, most say they came away with an improved view of Greek Cypriots. This was especially true among Turkish Cypriots coming south to work, to visit friends, to shop or for recreational purposes.

# Federal solution still best hope for resolving the Cyprus problem

The poll indicates that large majorities in both communities are sceptical about prospects for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem in the foreseeable future. At the same time, only small minorities within each of the two communities seem to believe that "the current status quo is the solution".

While Greek Cypriots would ideally choose a unitary state solution and Turkish Cypriots ideally a two state solution, a large majority in each community see a federal solution as the second best option and would be prepared to tolerate such a solution as a compromise option. Only 30% of Turkish Cypriots and 35% of Greek Cypriots would adamantly oppose and reject any plan promoting a federal solution to the Cyprus problem. More Turkish Cypriots than Greek Cypriots consider a federal

The charts and texts that follow were selected to present a general overview of the results derived from the interviews conducted this year. Drawn from sections included in the survey, a number of questions were chosen with corresponding data, to illustrate how Cypriots generally view the UN's work in Cyprus. The data also provides insight into Cypriot opinion on a variety of topics that the mission intends to take into consideration when implementing future programmes. The complete presentation of charts with commentary is available in English, Turkish and Greek on our website for easy downloading. SPSS raw data files can also be obtained here. ([www.unficy.org](http://www.unficy.org))

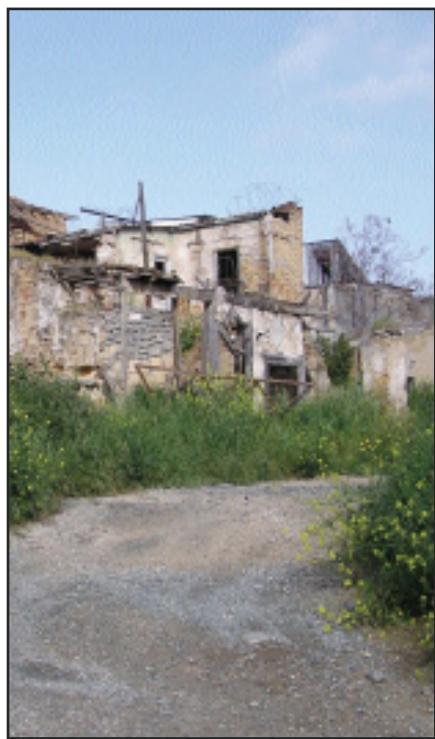
settlement to be "satisfactory. Greek Cypriots tend to view such an outcome as "tolerable".

Levels of trust between the two communities remain very low, with majorities in each believing that, even if a comprehensive settlement is achieved, the other community cannot be trusted to stick to the terms agreed. Indeed, when it comes to a preferred settlement, each of the two communities seems to misperceive the other's intentions. While the majority of Greek Cypriots indicate a willingness to tolerate a federal solution as a "second best" outcome, Turkish Cypriots believe that the majority of Greek Cypriots would reject any federal solution outright. Despite the reality that the majority of Turkish Cypriots would reject a unitary state outright, Greek Cypriots persist in the belief that most Turkish Cypriots would consider a unitary state to be satisfactory.

When it comes to everyday interaction on a personal and neighbourly level, the majority of Greek Cypriots is predisposed towards coexistence with Turkish Cypriots. In contrast, Turkish Cypriots are more divided, albeit reflecting a more moderate range of views than a year ago, in indicating strong approval or disapproval of coexistence with Greek Cypriots.

The process that led to the Annan plan in 2004 is seen as controversial by the Greek Cypriots and acceptable to the

Turkish Cypriots. On the other hand, the public in both communities accepts the "Gambari process" even though a majority in each believes the UN's handling of the process favours the other side. In fact, approval or disapproval of the process is influenced by the same factors in each community – faith in the UN's impartiality and efficacy and the desire for coexistence with the other community and a settlement of the Cyprus problem. The survey response also shows that those who counted themselves regular readers of the island's main newspapers tended to take a more disapproving view of the ongoing process.

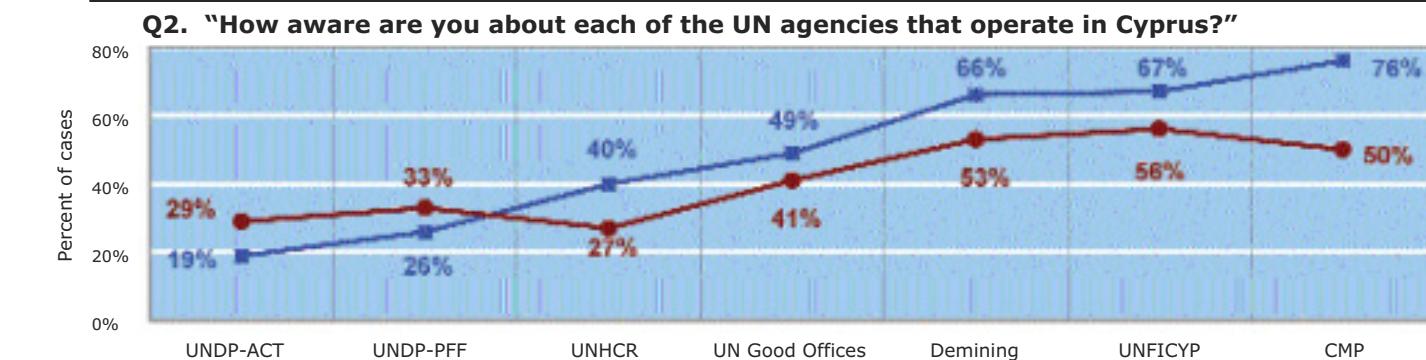
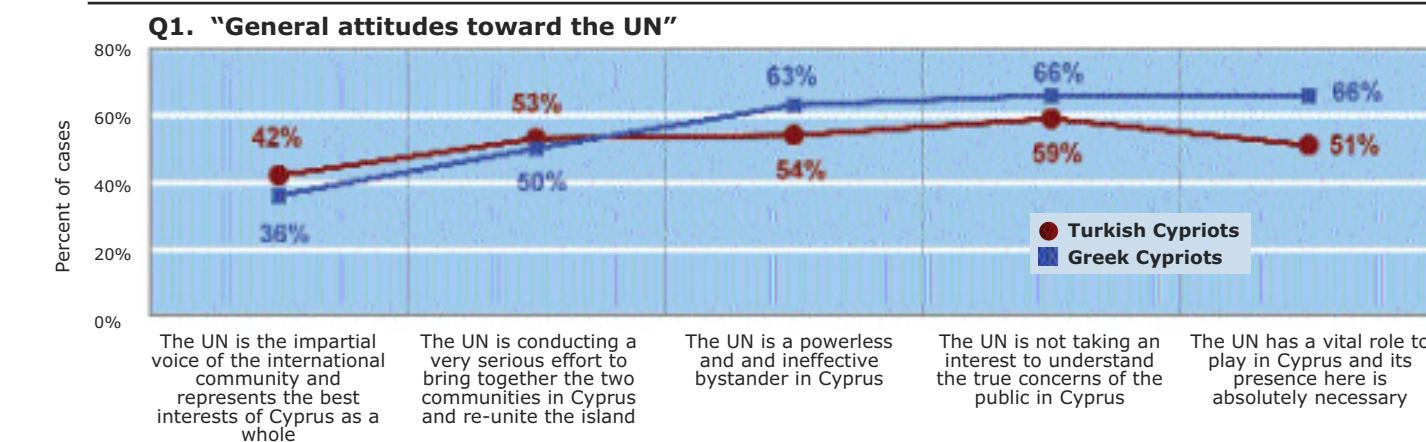


## General Perceptions of the UN

Majorities in both communities consider that the UN has an important role to play in Cyprus and that its presence here is essential. A majority concern that seems to emerge, from both communities, is that the UN needs to make a stronger effort to reach out and understand the concerns of the wider Cypriot public.

As to the specifics of the UN presence in Cyprus, the public is

most aware of the Committee for Missing Persons (CMP), UNFICYP and the de-mining project (UNMAC). The public is least aware of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme - Action for Cooperation and Trust (UNDP-ACT), and the United Nations Development Programme - Partnership for the Future (UNDP-PFF).



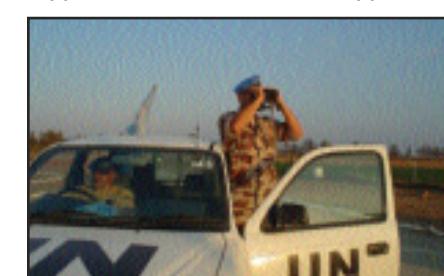
## Sense of Security

To the question "How secure or insecure do you feel living in Cyprus today", almost all Turkish Cypriots respond that they feel somewhat or very secure. In contrast, over half of the Greek Cypriots respond that they feel somewhat or very insecure.

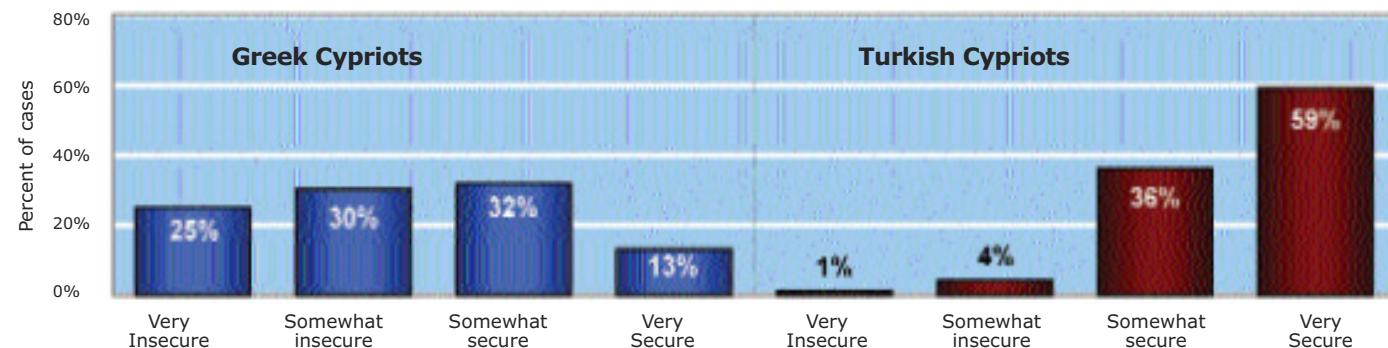
The main source of Turkish Cypriot security is the presence of the Turkish Army in Cyprus. In addition, a proportion of Turkish Cypriots derives a sense of security from the fact that bilateral relations between Turkey and Greece have improved in recent years. Greek Cypriots derive a modicum of security from the presence of the

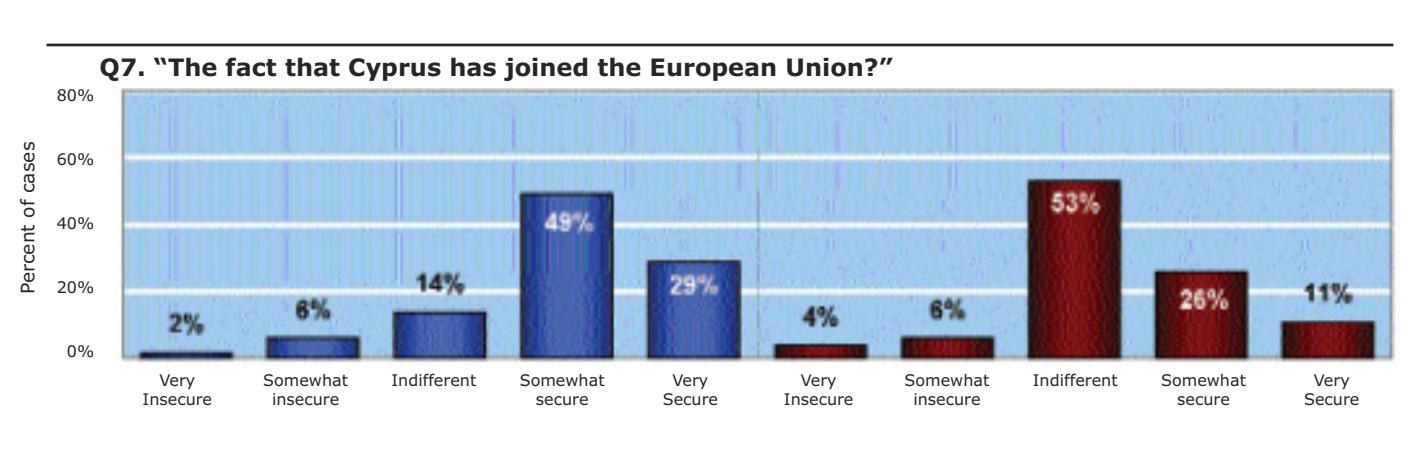
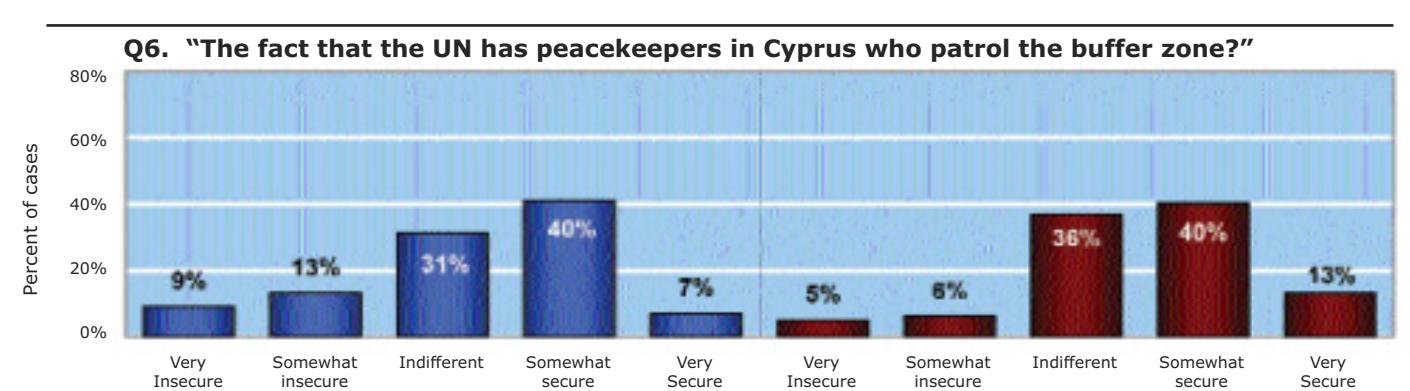
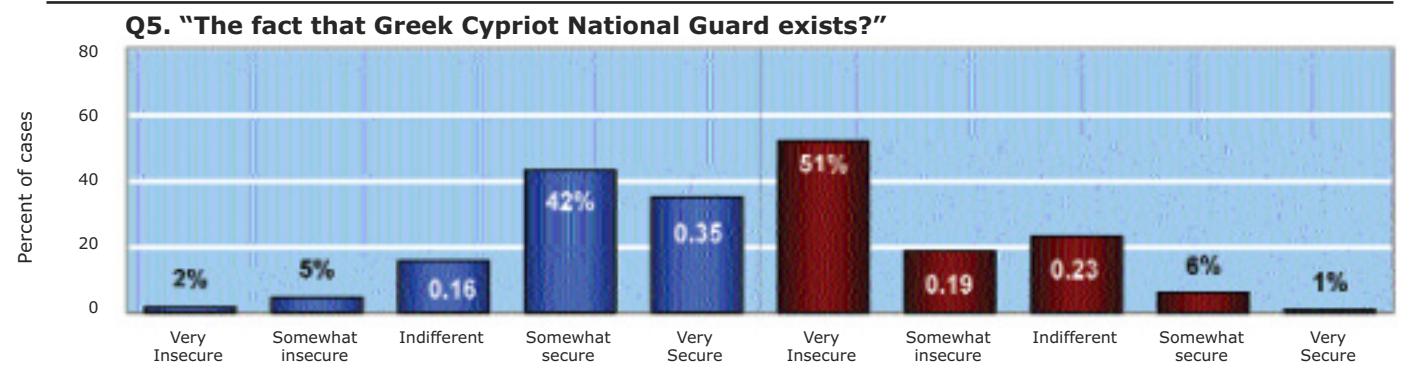
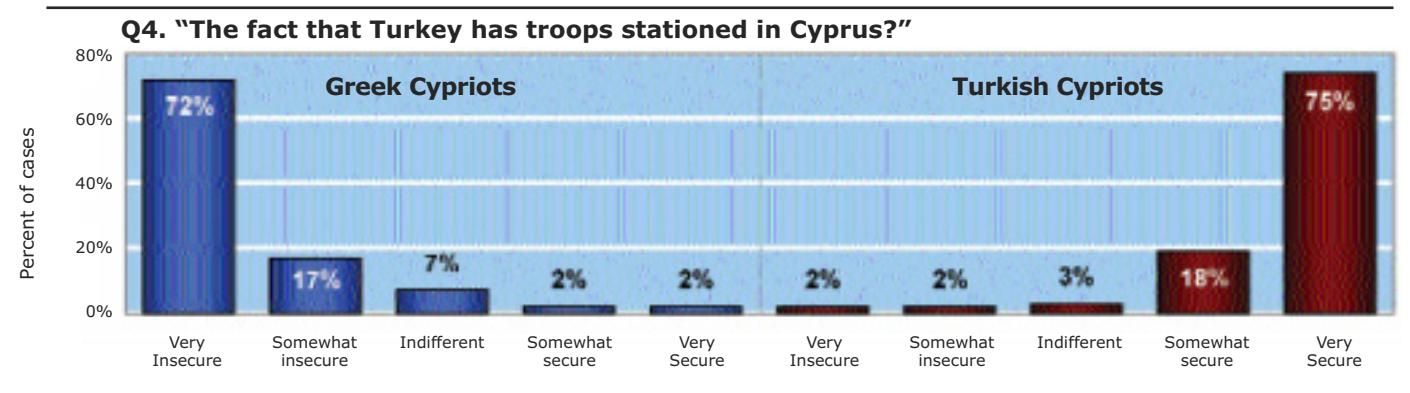
Greek Cypriot National Guard and from the fact that Cyprus is now an EU member. However, neither of these two sources of security is perceived to be so credible as to offset the overriding sense of threat that derives from the presence of the Turkish Army. In pondering the probability of different threat scenarios, most Greek Cypriots consider the notion that the Turkish Army may move aggressively against them in the future to be a definite possibility. Turkish Cypriots, however, consider it very unlikely that the Turkish Army would take such aggressive action against Greek Cypriots in the future. The sense of security which the two

communities derive from the presence of the UN Peacekeeping Force is not as strong as that which each community derives from its own unilateral arrangements for military security. That said, the UN Peacekeeping Force is the only military force in Cyprus that simultaneously enhances the sense of security both of Greek Cypriots and of Turkish Cypriots.



## Q3. "On the whole, how secure or insecure would you say you feel living in Cyprus today?"





## UNFICYP

Majorities in both communities are aware of the presence and role of UNFICYP in Cyprus, though Greek Cypriots are more likely to be more aware of UNFICYP than Turkish Cypriots. Furthermore, majorities in both communities say they consider UNFICYP to be a positive presence on the island, and

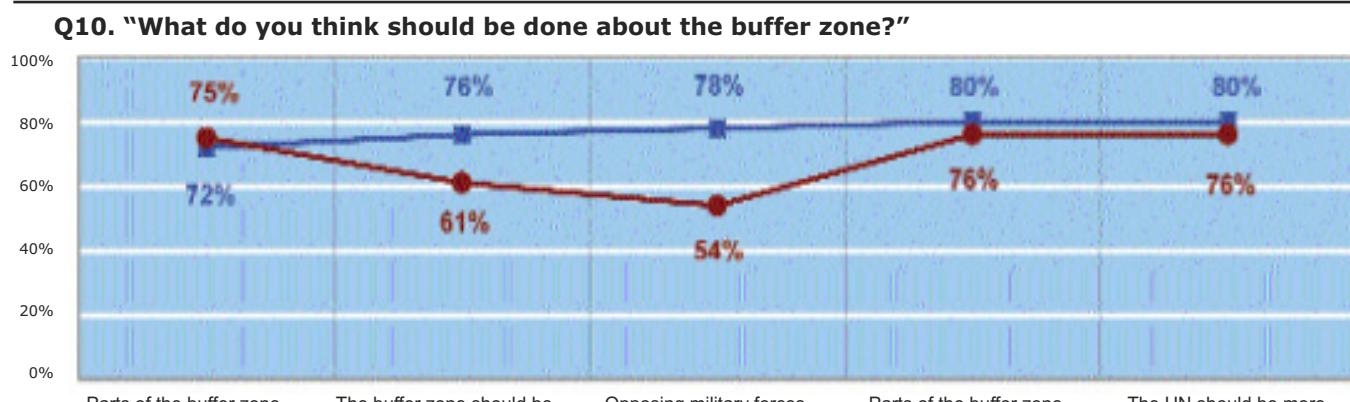
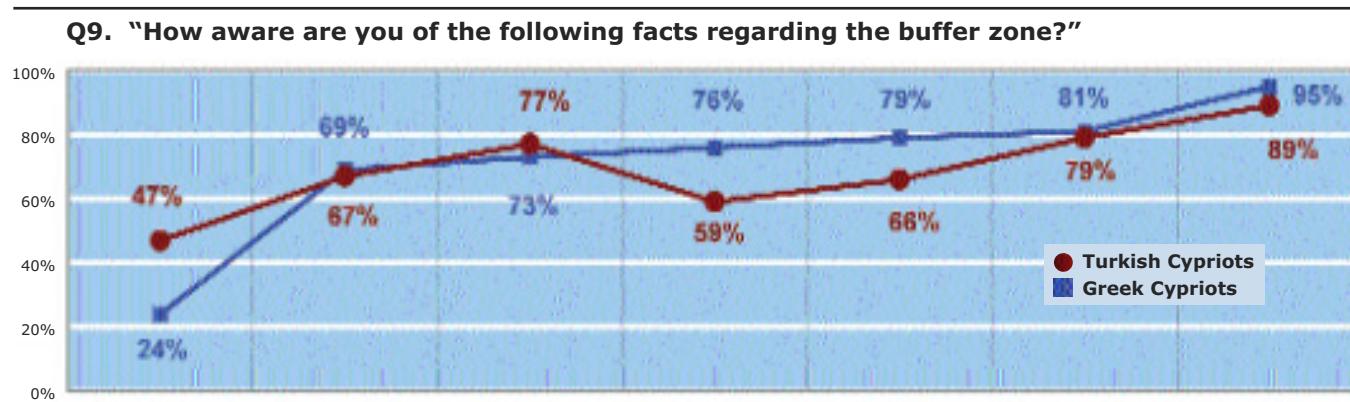
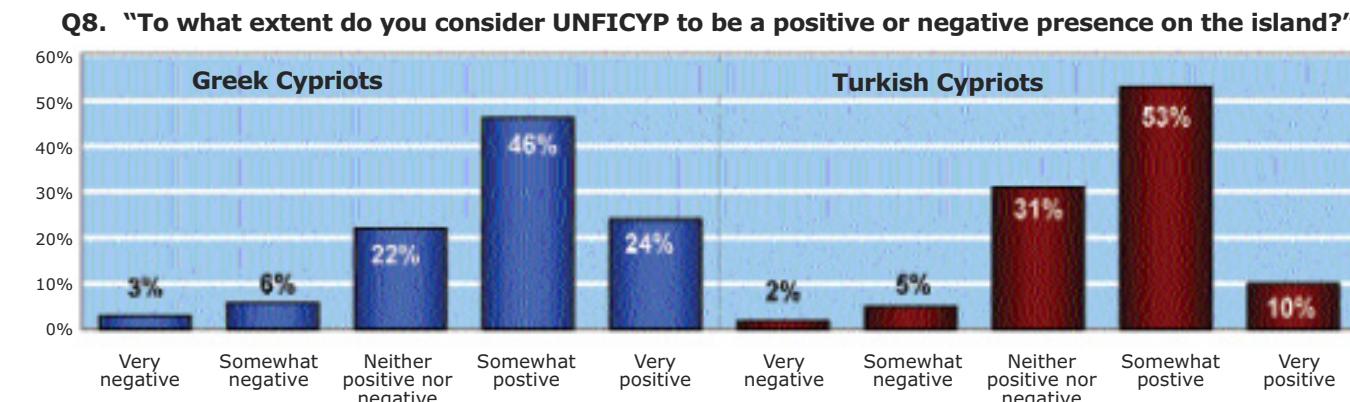
deem as negative any scenario in which UNFICYP withdraws prior to the restoration of normality.

Regarding the UN buffer zone specifically, most Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are aware of its basic purpose, and also of the regulations and limitations regarding its use. It is apparent that not everyone is aware of the fact that over the years, the

buffer zone has become an environmental preserve in which rare animal and plant species flourish.

Regarding possibilities for future use of the buffer zone, large majorities of both communities would favour, firstly, the utilisation of the buffer zone for projects that would benefit both communities and increase contact

between them, secondly, the designation of certain parts of the buffer zone as environmental parks, and thirdly, more freedom for owners to use their land in the buffer zone as they see fit.



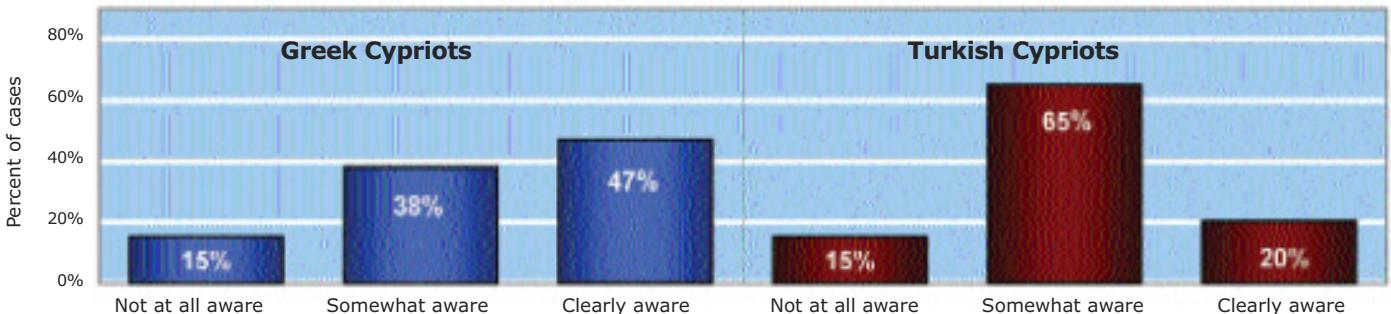
## Demining

Majorities in both communities are aware that demining activities are ongoing in the buffer zone. Furthermore, majorities of both communities agree that minefields need to be dismantled before farmers can be allowed to use their land in the buffer zone, or before any further crossing points can be opened.

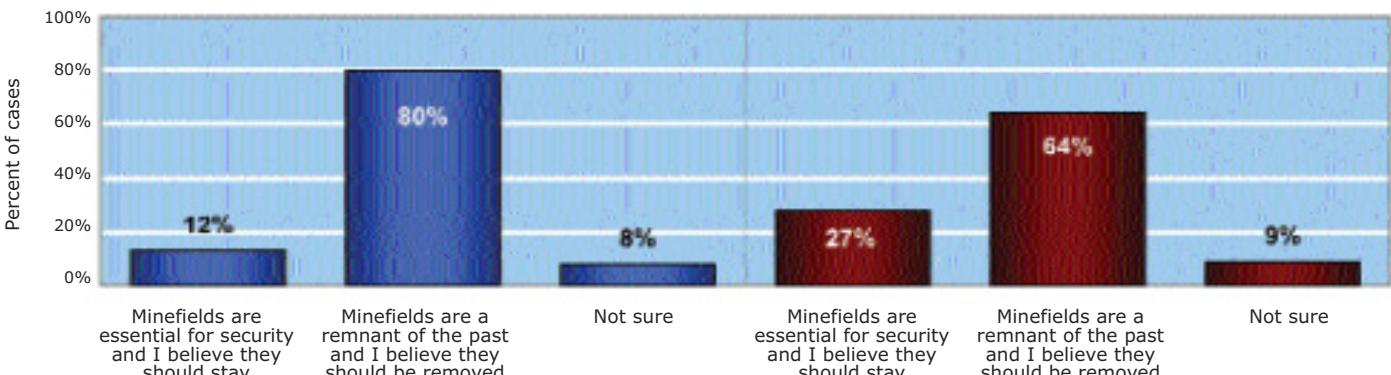
disposing of anti-personnel mines is an international obligation in accordance with the Ottawa Treaty. In contrast, most are aware that minefields need to be dismantled before farmers can be allowed to use their land in the buffer zone, or before any further crossing points can be opened.



**Q11. "How aware are you that demining is being conducted in the buffer zone by the UN?"**



**Q12. "Which of these statements are you more in agreement with?"**



## Committee for Missing Persons

Among Turkish Cypriots, the prevalent belief is that all the Missing Persons are in fact

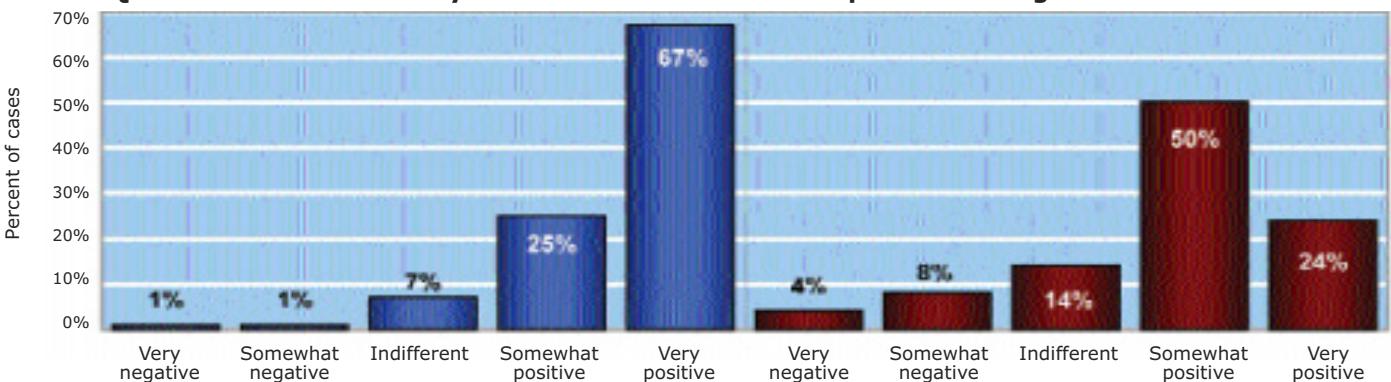
deceased. By contrast, one third of Greek Cypriots believes that some of the Missing Persons are still alive somewhere.

Among Greek Cypriots, almost everyone (96% of those interviewed) is aware that a

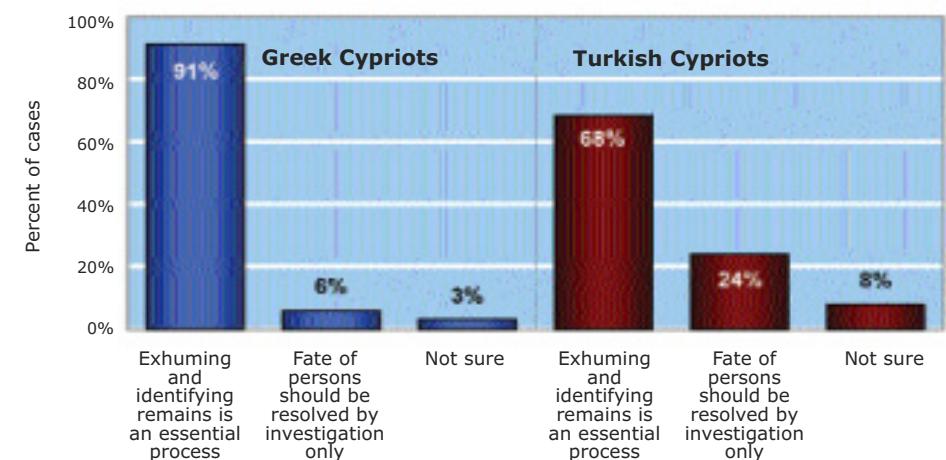
large number of exhumations have taken place in recent months.

Among Turkish Cypriots, about two thirds of those interviewed report that they were aware of the recent exhumations.

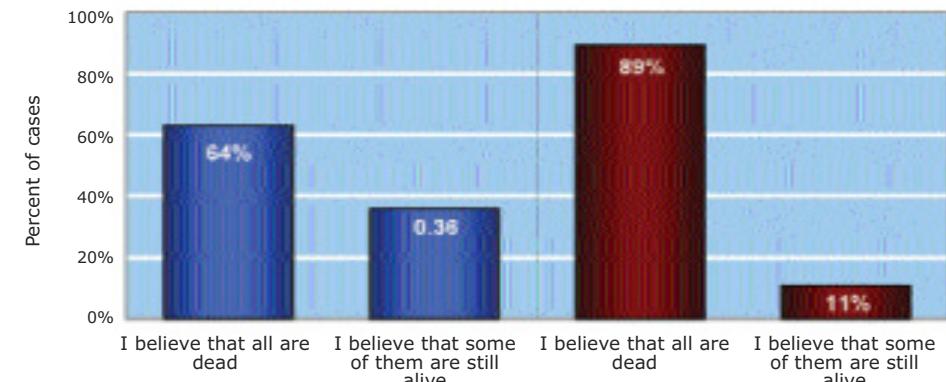
**Q13. "To what extent do you consider the CMP to be a positive or negative effect on the island?"**



**Q14. "Which of these two statements are you more in agreement with?"**



**Q15. "Do you believe that all the missing persons are dead, or that some of them are still alive somewhere?"**



In addition, the great majority both of Greek Cypriots and of Turkish Cypriots approve of the work which the Committee for Missing Persons is engaged in. Specifically, about 90% of Greek Cypriots and 75% of Turkish Cypriots approve of the recent work of the Committee for Missing Persons.



## Opening of the Crossings



religious pilgrimage. By contrast, the majority of Turkish Cypriots who have crossed report that their opinion of Greek Cypriots has not changed as a result. Of those who report a change in attitude, more say that they now have a better opinion as a result of crossing than those who say their opinion has worsened as a result. Specifically, Turkish Cypriots who have crossed in order to work, to visit friends, to enjoy the nightlife or to go shopping, tend to report that they have a better opinion of Greek Cypriots as a result of crossing.

Since the checkpoints opened in 2003, about 40% of Greek Cypriots declare that they have never crossed, about 50% of Greek Cypriots declare that they have crossed once or a few times in the past but no longer, while about 10% of Greek Cypriots still cross the checkpoints at a greater or lesser frequency.

By comparison, about 30% of Turkish Cypriots have never

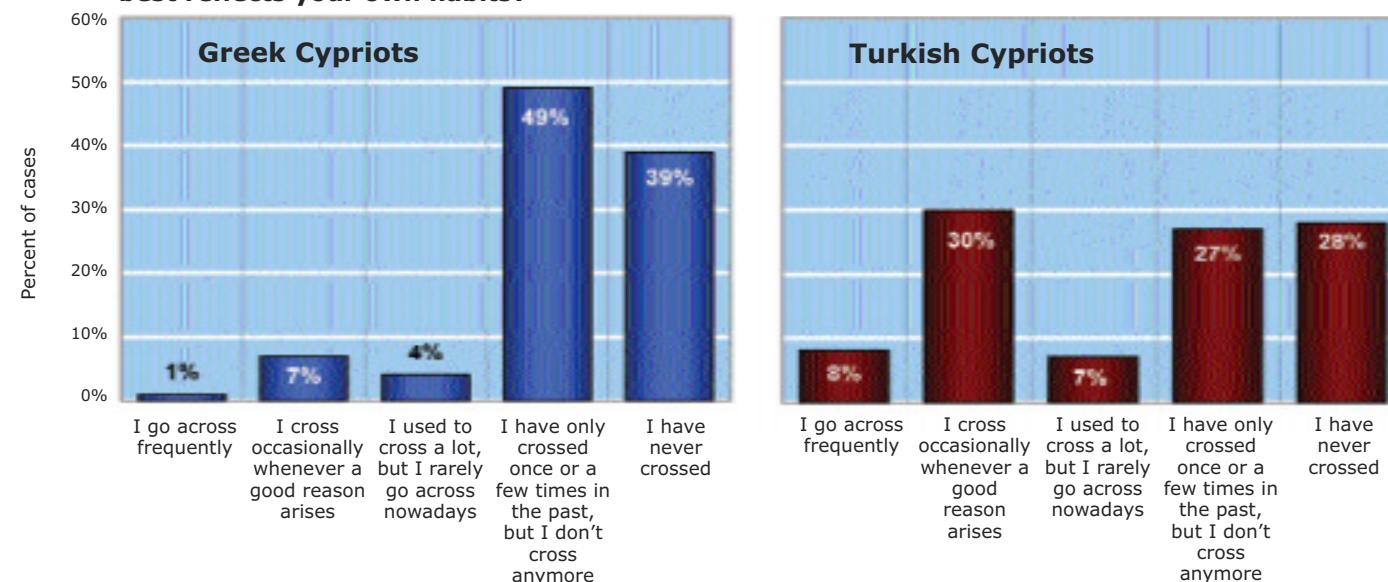
crossed, about 25% of Turkish Cypriots have crossed once or a few times in the past but don't cross any more, while about 45% of Turkish Cypriots still cross the checkpoints at a greater or lesser frequency. The conclusion drawn is that almost all Turkish Cypriots who had the right and opportunity to cross actually went ahead and did so.

The vast majority of Greek Cypriots who have crossed chose to restrict themselves to a visit to their pre-1974 home, often combining the trip with a religious pilgrimage to an Orthodox church or monastery. Very few of those who crossed have allowed to taking advantage of recreational and commercial opportunities.

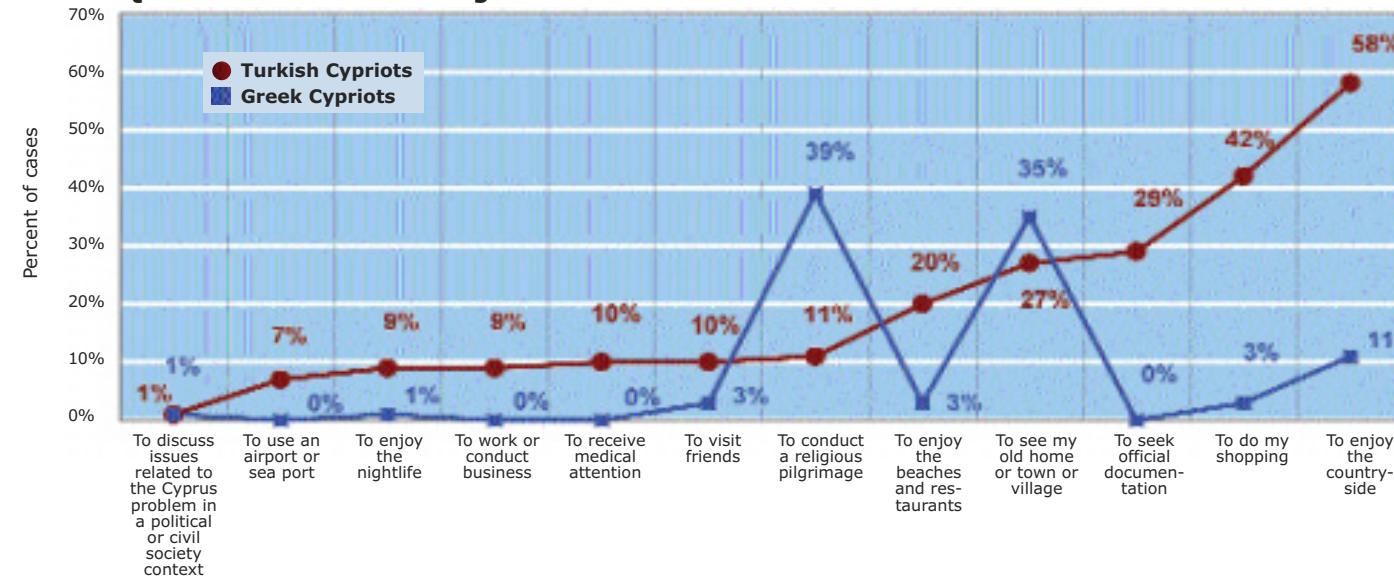
By contrast, the majority of Turkish Cypriots who crossed have done so primarily as visitors seeking to take advantage of the new opportunities afforded them by the opening of the checkpoints, with the most commonly cited

reasons for crossing being, firstly, to enjoy the countryside and, secondly, to go shopping. That said, a large number of Turkish Cypriots also crossed to work, or to receive medical care, to visit their pre-1974 home, to seek official documentation, to work, or to receive medical care.

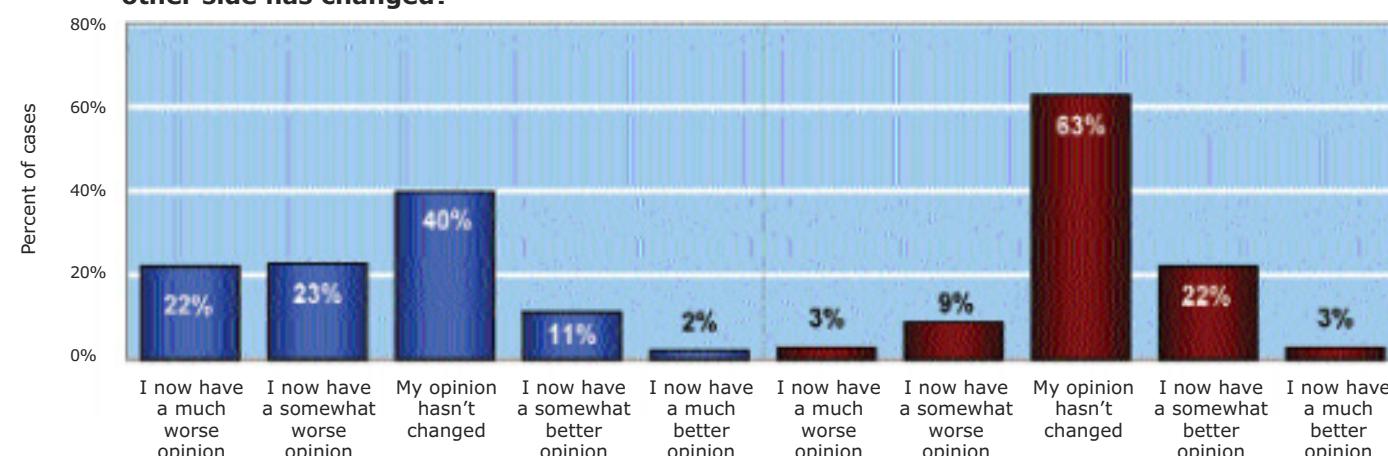
**Q16. "Regarding the frequency of crossing to the other side, which of the following statements best reflects your own habits?"**



**Q17. "Reasons for crossing"**



**Q18. "As a result of crossing the checkpoints, would you say that your opinion of people from the other side has changed?"**



## Inter-communal Contact

Of the various possible types of inter-communal contact, the most acceptable to both communities is environmental cooperation by Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot NGOs, and also cooperation involving Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot academics working together on common research projects.

Even though both communities generally accept and acknowledge the merits and benefits of bicultural contact, there is great sensitivity over the extent to which non-Cypriot intermediaries should get involved in facilitating and promoting such activities. While "assistance by the UN or others" is seen as

potentially helpful, the overall message is that non-Cypriot intermediaries should maintain a delicate balance by "assisting and facilitating" while avoiding any perception of "interfering and meddling".

Large majorities in both communities believe that inter-communal contact today is essential to pave the way for a united Cyprus tomorrow.

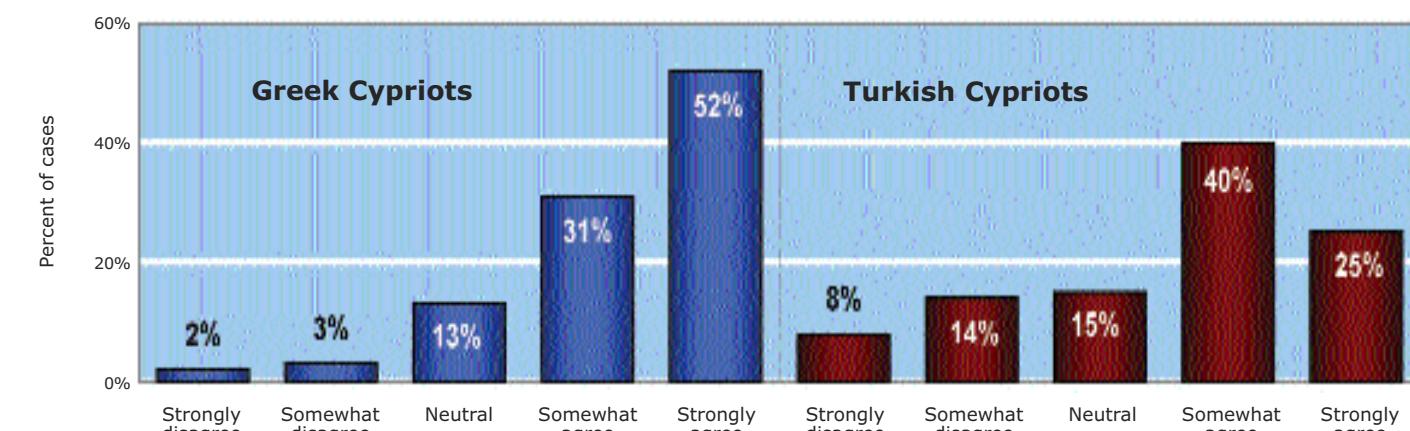
Similarly, a majority in both communities rejects the notion that "only people who are confused about their national identities take part in inter-communal activities".

Despite majority goodwill in both communities to engage in inter-communal contact, only a small percentage of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots has actually come in contact with members of the

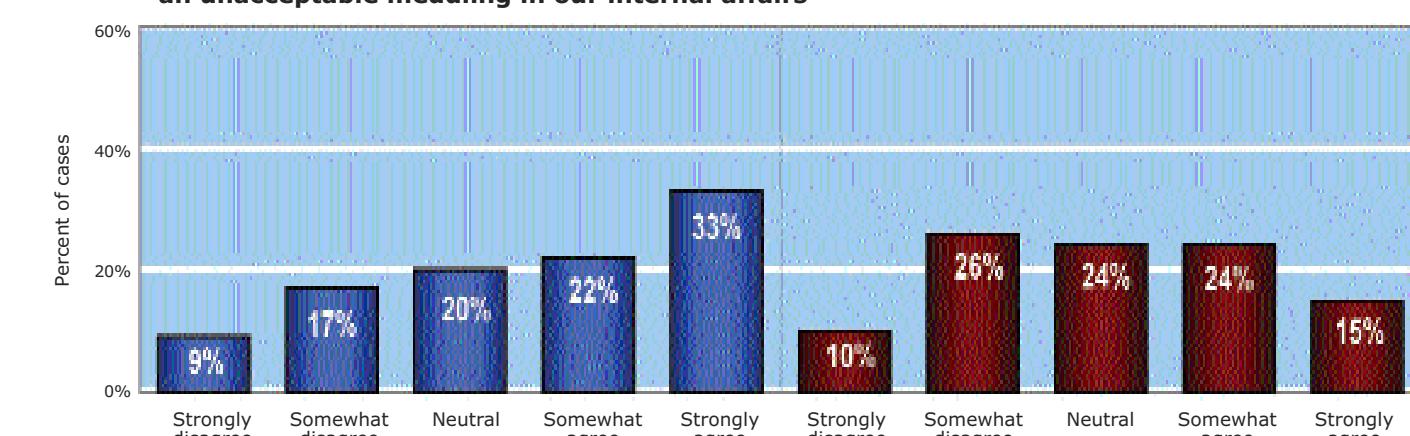
other community. In those cases where there has been contact with people of the other community, the result on the whole has been an increase in the level of trust towards members of the other community.

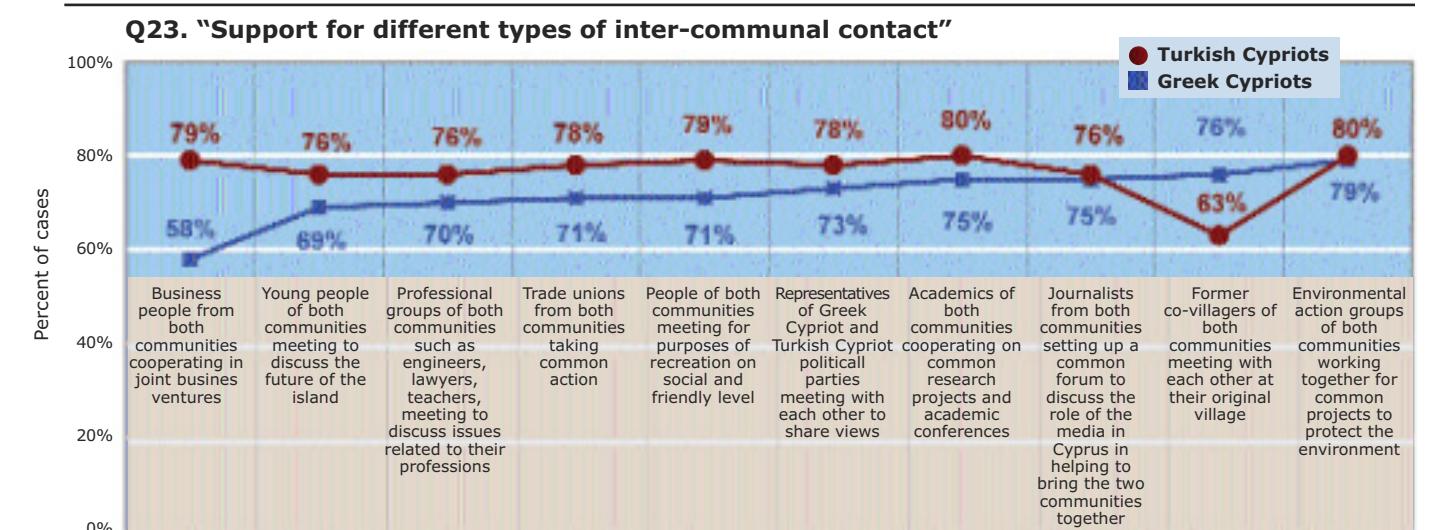
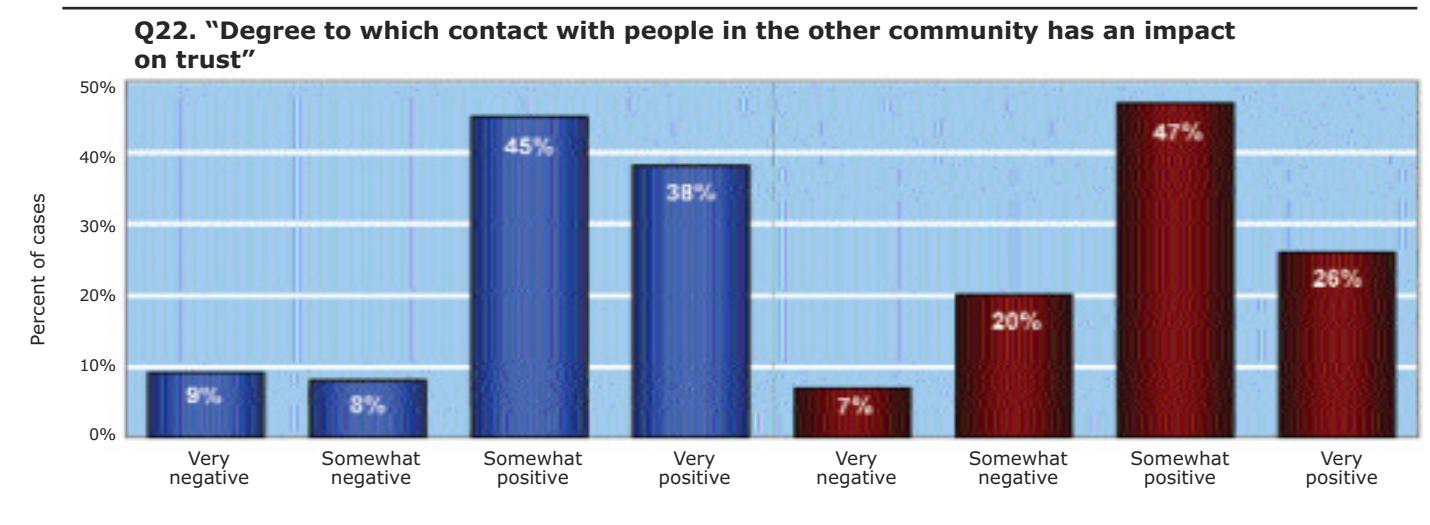
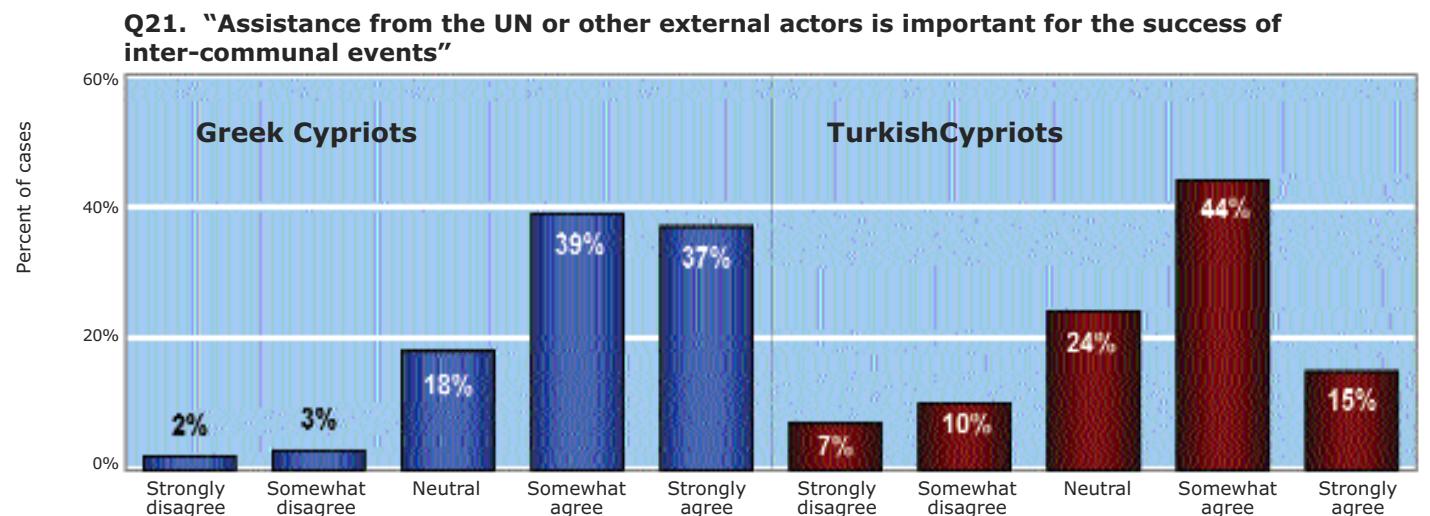


**Q19. "Inter-communal contact today is essential in paving the way for a united Cyprus tomorrow"**



**Q20. "Any type of non-Cypriot involvement in the whole issue of inter-communal contact is an unacceptable meddling in our internal affairs"**





## Prospects for a Settlement

Large majorities from both communities are currently sceptical about the prospect of a comprehensive settlement in the foreseeable future.

Nonetheless, only small minorities from the two communities seem to believe that

"the current status quo is the solution".

As for the type of solution preferred, the Greek Cypriots would ideally choose a unitary state solution and the Turkish Cypriots would ideally choose a two state solution. However, neither of these frameworks would be acceptable simultaneously to the other community as

well – Greek Cypriots strongly reject the notion of a two state solution, while Turkish Cypriots strongly reject the notion of a unitary state solution.

A federal solution is seen as second best by both communities – second best to a unitary state for Greek Cypriots, and second best to a two state solution for Turkish Cypriots. In

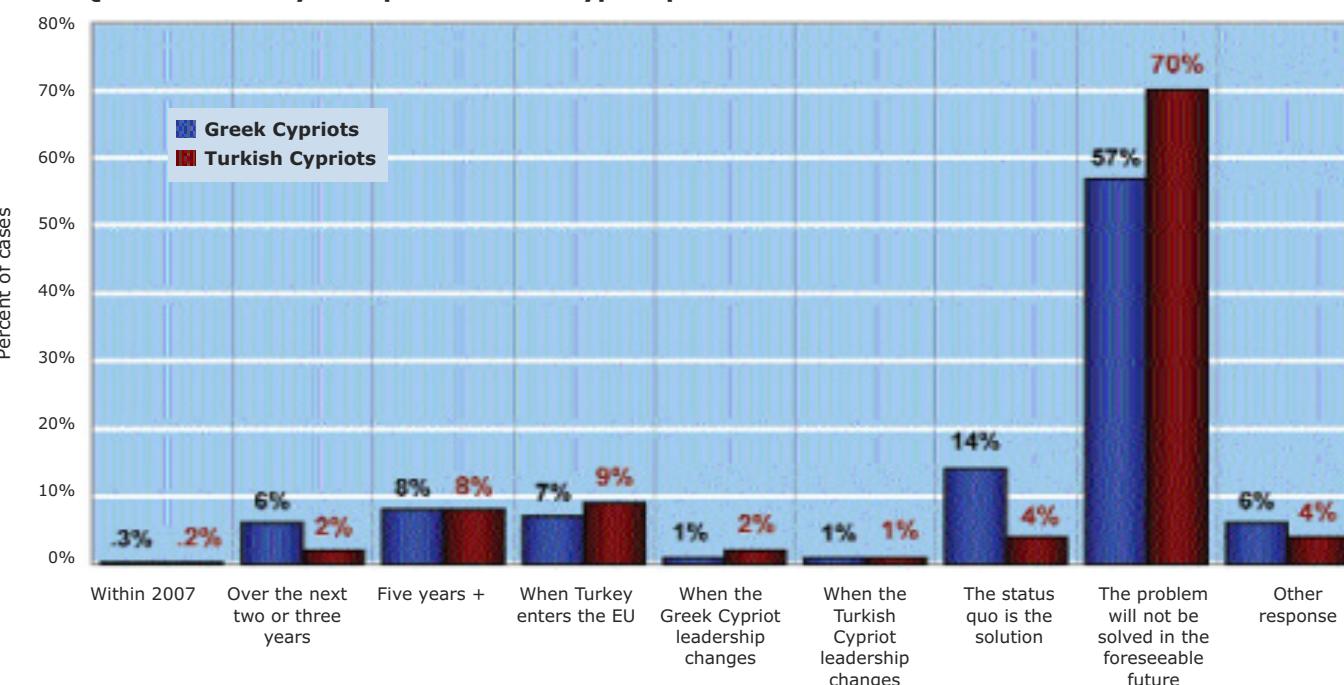
this spirit, and seen as a compromise option, large majorities of both communities would at least be willing to tolerate a federal solution. Only 28% of Turkish Cypriots and 35% of Greek Cypriots would under any circumstances and regardless of the specific plan, reject a

federal solution to the Cyprus problem.

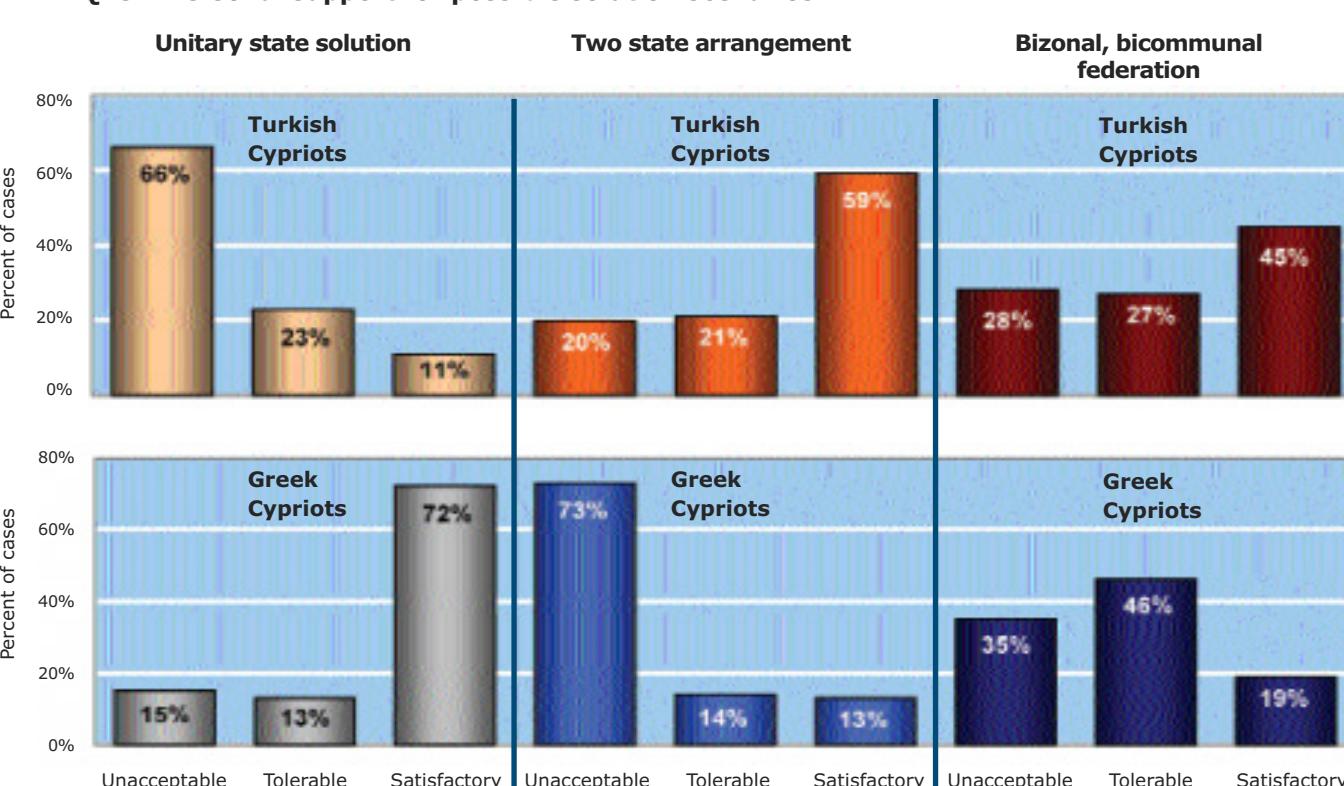
More Turkish Cypriots than Greek Cypriots consider a federal settlement of the Cyprus problem to be "satisfactory". Greek Cypriots, in contrast, tend to view a federal settlement as merely "tolerable". However, on a level of personal relations, this

picture is reversed. More Greek Cypriots than Turkish Cypriots are likely to report "that they have much in common with members of the other community", and that "they would be willing to accept everyday and neighbourly coexistence of the two communities".

## Q24. "When do you expect that the Cyprus problem will be solved?"



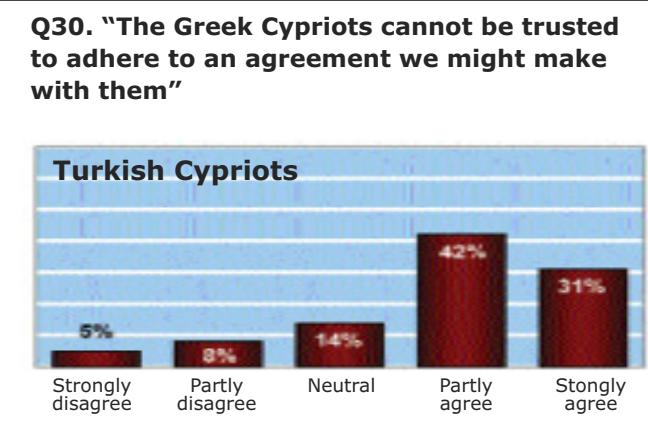
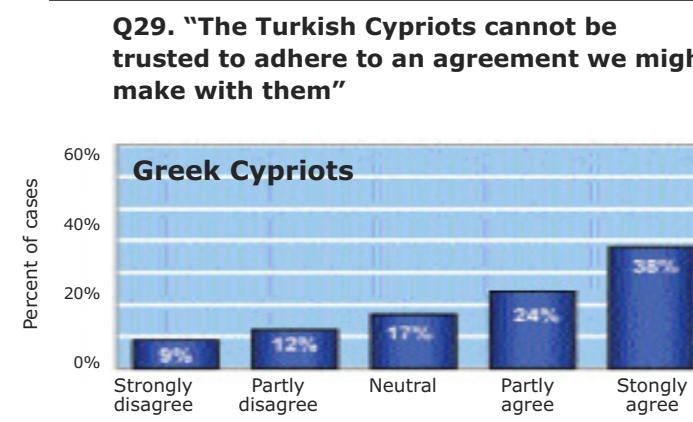
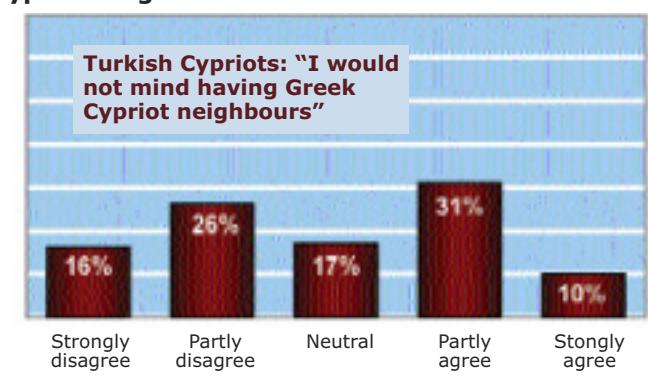
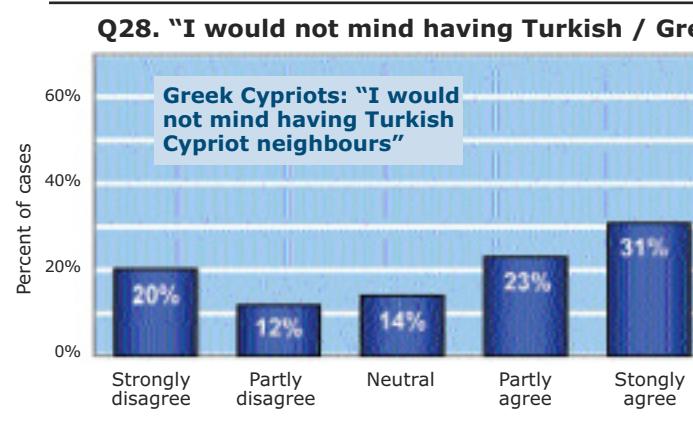
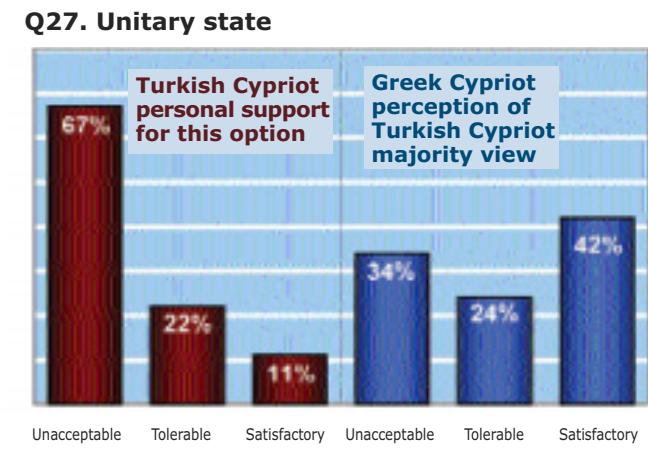
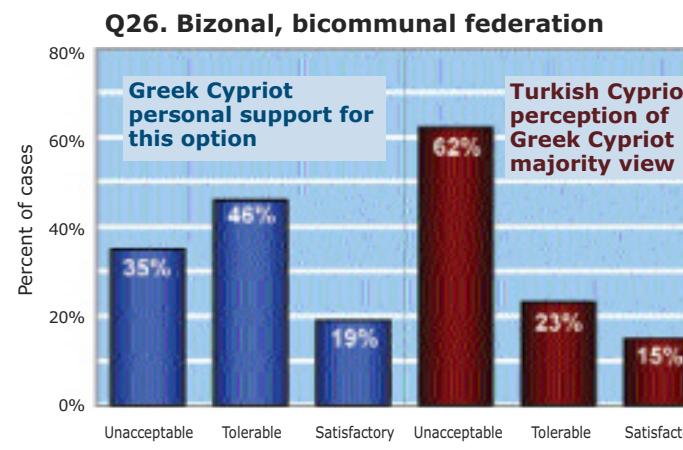
## Q25. "Personal support for possible solution scenarios"



Each of the two communities seems to misperceive the intentions of the other with regard to the type of settlement preferred. In the Greek Cypriot case, while the reality is that the majority of Greek Cypriots would be willing to tolerate a federal solution as a "second best" alternative, the Turkish Cypriots would in fact consider a unitary

believe that the majority of Greek Cypriots would reject any federal solution outright. In the Turkish Cypriot case, while the reality is that the majority of Turkish Cypriots would reject a unitary state solution outright, Greek Cypriots believe that the majority of Turkish Cypriots would in fact consider a unitary

state solution to be satisfactory. As in previous years, the level of trust between the two communities remains very low – majorities of both communities believe that, even if a Comprehensive Settlement is achieved, the other community cannot be trusted to stay loyal to what has been agreed.



## Poll Identity

**General population sample:** 1,000 Turkish Cypriots and 1,000 Greek Cypriots

**Booster sample:** 100 Turkish Cypriots and 250 Greek Cypriots residing within the UN buffer zone

**Method of data collection:** Face-to-face interviews with a structured questionnaire at the home of respondents and in their native language

**Sampling process:** Multi-stage random stratified sampling

**Period of data collection:** 26 January – 19 February 2007

**Project coordination:** Brian Kelly, UNFICYP Spokesperson and Anne Bursey, UNFICYP Public Information Officer

**Project consultants:** Erol Kaymak and Alexandros Lordos

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## The Role of the UN

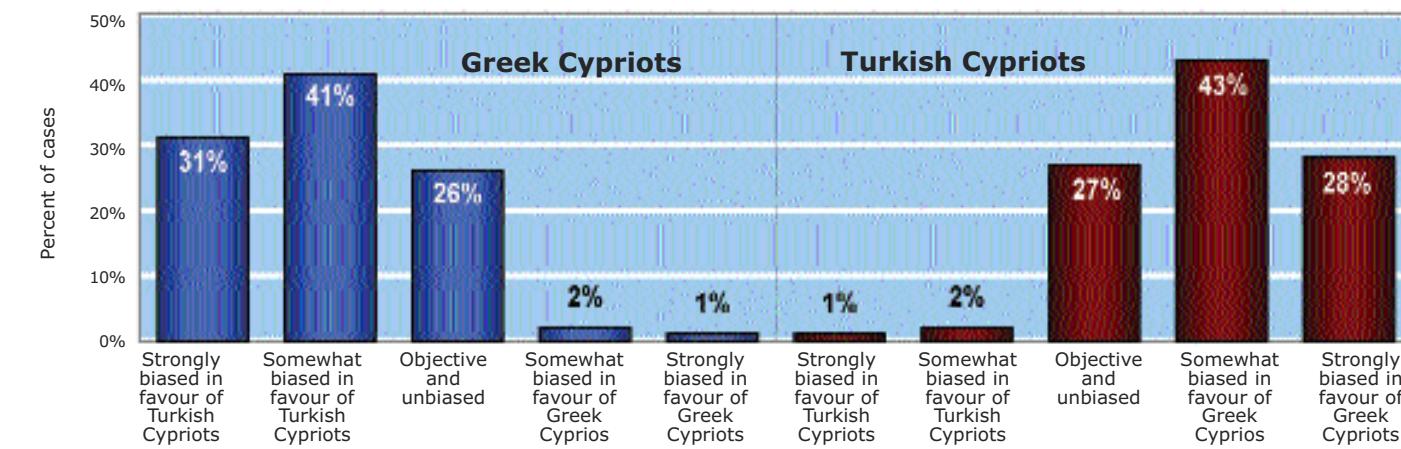
The process that led up to the Annan plan in 2004 is seen as controversial by the Greek Cypriots and acceptable by the Turkish Cypriots. In contrast, the "Gambari Process" that is currently underway is seen as simultaneously acceptable both by the Greek Cypriot public and by the Turkish Cypriot public.

In relation to the current "Gambari Process", a majority of Greek Cypriots believes that the UN is biased in favour of Turkish Cypriots,

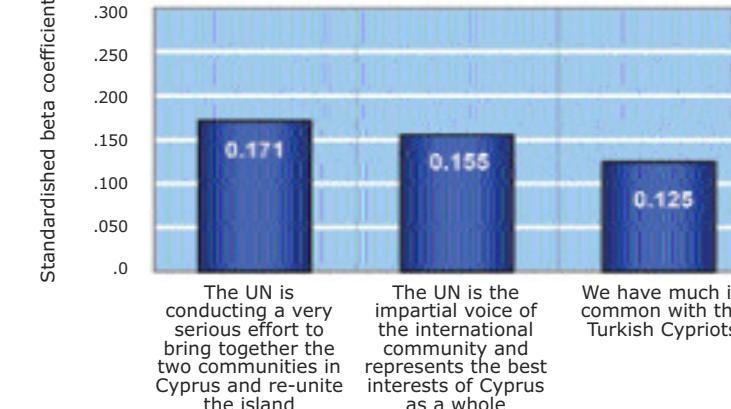
while a majority of Turkish Cypriots believes that the UN is biased in favour of Greek Cypriots.

Similar factors influence the level of approval or disapproval of the current UN process, both among Greek Cypriots and among Turkish Cypriots. Faith in the UN's impartiality and efficacy translates into increased support for the process, while the desire for coexistence with the other community and a settlement of the Cyprus problem also leads people to view the process favourably.

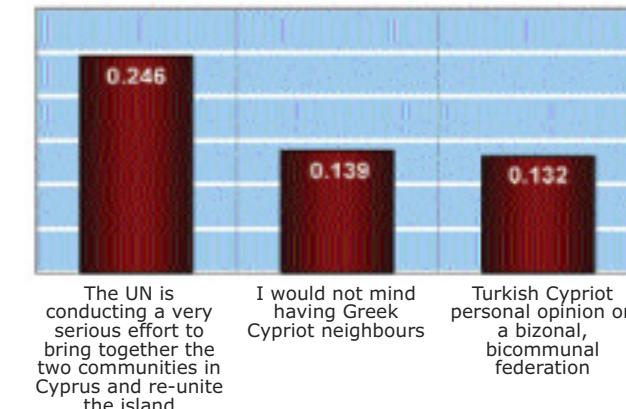
## Q31. "In your opinion, is the UN's current effort objective, or biased in favour of one or the other side?"



## Beta 1. Factors which influence Greek Cypriot support of the current UN process.



## Beta 2. Factors which influence Turkish Cypriot support of the current UN process.



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secure or insecure? Do you feel you are still alive?  
inter-communal contact in Cyprus?  
Unitary State Support for different types of inter-communal contact  
consider UNFICYP to be a positive or negative presence in Cyprus  
mentioned in Cyprus Personal support for possible  
Factors which influence Greek Cypriot support  
Bizonal, bicomunal Federation How aware are you of the following factors?  
Greek-Cypriot involvement in the whole issue of inter-communal contact is a  
The fact that Greece has troops stationed in Cyprus Factors which influence  
The fact that Cyprus has joined the European Union Bizonal, bicomunal Federation  
the fact that the UN has peacekeepers in Cyprus who patrol the buffer zone  
How aware are you that demining is being conducted in the  
of these two statements are you more in agreement with?  
problem will be solved? To what extent do you consider  
In your opinion, is the UN's current effort objective  
What do you think should be done about the  
more in agreement with?  
Which of these  
Fact