

It was about time

After almost 43 years of independence the Cyprus Republic may soon have its own National Anthem. In January, after the go ahead was given by Mssrs Clerides and Denktash, the United Nations announced through the press that a competition would be held for the composition of a National Anthem and the design of a new flag for the country in the event that ongoing negotiations prove successful.

Given that our country will probably soon cease to be the only one in the world without a National Anthem, the Republic of Cyprus will no longer need to use the National Anthem of Greece which it "borrowed" and has been using officially since 1966.

It is surprising that the announcement did not create the usual negative reaction that has occurred when the matter of the National Anthem and the flag was raised in the past. It can be assumed that the advanced phase of the discussions and the overall climate served to dampen excessive reaction. However, it was commented that the Anthem "is a state one and not a national one as such". Others implied that the move by the United Nations was made to enable them to act as an arbitrator, a role that the General Secretary of the United Nations wanted but the National Council rejected. If this were true we would object given our belief that any solution must be reached by the two sides so that the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus is well grounded prior its transformation to a Federal State. However, the UN's announcement starts with the phrase "following authorization by Mssrs Clerides and Denktash" which does not indicate arbitration.

It could be argued that the U.N. has been hasty in their announcement, since essential parts of the Anan plan have not been agreed upon yet and the creation of a new state cannot be expected in the immediate future. The move may indeed be premature but we consider it an indication that the international community would like to see the continuation of the negotiations and their fruitful conclusion. We therefore welcome the action as a positive development, although it would have been preferable if it had originated inside rather than outside Cyprus.

With particular reference to the flag, the New Cyprus Association (NCA) would like to express its "sorrow" that it will cease to be the official emblem of our country if a solution is reached. Over the years the NCA has fought to have our flag recognized as the emblem of our entity as a state, but unfortunately it has to this day failed to be given the recognition accorded to the flags of other states in the world.

It can be argued that the distinction between a state and a National (ethnic) Anthem is only in the minds of nationalists who until now have not accepted the idea of an independent Republic of Cyprus, and of other people who are not properly/thoroughly informed. Anthems are called national, but they represent countries and not ethnic groups. We would like to note once again that there is no anthem of the Arab Nation but (22) twenty-two anthems that represent an equal number of Arab countries. Greece got its National Anthem, not before, but after it became a recognized country, following its independence.