



University of
Kent

Proposal for a Census of Internally Displaced Persons in Cyprus

Brief Summary of Proposal

As the Peace Process in Cyprus is moving towards its conclusion, it is of vital importance to ensure that the views of directly affected Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are incorporated into the design of the property settlement. To achieve this end, a **comprehensive but non-binding census** survey of preferences among all IDPs, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot, is hereby proposed.

Modality of implementation

The census survey will be initiated through **electronic and face-to-face interviews** with IDPs first at their current places of residence. Once baseline data has been collected, electronic access credentials will be provided to IDP participants, such that will allow them to **continue accessing and amending their responses** all the way through to the run-up of a future re-unification referendum. Each side will create a consortium of partners to prepare its survey. For the Greek Cypriot displaced and users, an **electronic secure platform** keeping the data entered can be created by the University of Cyprus that will integrate the functions of the Online valuation portal of the Department of Land and Surveys <http://parcel.dls.moi.gov.cy/search/ParcelSearchEN.aspx> currently existing.

The census survey will collect data on the following:

1. Different types of property that each IDP is the **original owner** of, including residential, commercial, agricultural and other plots.
2. Different types of property that each IDP is **currently using**, which originally belonged to members of the other community.
3. A **rank-ordered list of preferences** (acceptable or conditional) for each affected property that each IDP owns or currently uses. These will include: restitution of originally owned properties; monetary compensation for originally owned properties; exchange of originally owned property for currently used property, or other property in the region that the IDP now resides in; purchase of currently used property; exchange of property for equivalent property in the same town or village; and other potential remedies that the negotiators may opt to include in the census survey.

4. An inquiry into the **encouraging factors that would allow IDPs to re-settle** into areas currently held by the other community, with a special emphasis on: availability of native language schools or bicomunal schools; participation in local authorities; opportunities for employment; protection from crime; and recourse to the justice system.

The census survey could be conducted by a consortium of partners from the two communities, in collaboration with an advisory panel of Cypriot and international experts. Funds for the census could be sought from the European Union and/or the World Bank.

Advantages of the proposal

A comprehensive but non-binding census survey of preferences among all displaced persons will have the following three main advantages:

1. It will **address the insecurities of Turkish Cypriots** as to how many Greek Cypriots will choose to have their properties reinstated. The Turkish Cypriot position for majority ownership in their constituent state will be fairly easily addressed but without contradicting the rights of legal owners.
2. The **Greek Cypriot IDPs will be asked first** as to their intentions. According to our surveys this is by far the most important factor determining a 'yes' vote in a referendum even among non-refugees.
3. For potential returnees committed to return under Turkish Cypriot administration, the Greek Cypriot mediating team could negotiate their political rights and determine the most favourable conditions for return, including housing, education, hospitals, and voting rights. For non-returnees, there could be a **combination of acceptable compensations and restitution** depending on the framework agreed in the negotiations.

The survey will NOT aim to:

1. Commit the property owners until the very end of the process. Owners will have the opportunity to **update their preferences in an online** password-protected platform and to answer any new questions that might emerge during the negotiation process
2. Equally, **the survey will not commit the negotiating team**. Participants will be informed that the negotiating team will try to meet their expectations. However, for this to be more likely, it will be necessary for property owners to list as many alternative remedies acceptable to them as possible.
3. The survey **will not interfere with the right** of current or future generations to purchase land or reside anywhere in the island. This right could be constitutionally guaranteed and enforced.

In terms of the sustainability of the settlement, the census will help us:

1. **Re-establish public services** and schools in the areas under Turkish Cypriot administration for Greek Cypriot returnees by learning exactly what type of schooling they themselves prefer for their children
2. Provide the **general demographic profile of the returnees** in order to provide appropriate public support mechanisms such as hospitals and road infrastructure.
3. Preserve **multiculturalism across the island** (e.g. all property belonging to the church will be reinstated to help preserve a multi-religious Cyprus).

Beyond Cyprus the census will:

1. Help estimate precisely the financial or other needs of the Cyprus settlement to **validate current World Bank estimates** and proposals
2. Present international donors, foreign governments and national parliaments with **correct data (not speculations)** to facilitate their decisions to support these needs (including details as to their own nationals/Cypriot diaspora currently residing in Australia, the UK and North America)
3. **Ring-fence the peace talks** by engaging Greek and Turkish Cypriot property owners as individuals therefore making any effort by Turkey (or domestically) to prevent the settlement extremely unpopular.

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