

Statement by Alvaro de Soto on the outcome of the referendum (Nicosia, 24 April 2004)

Caption: On 24 April 2004, in the light of the negative outcome of the referendum on the reunification of the island of Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, delivers an address in Nicosia in which he notes the outcome of the vote and reaffirms his wish for a settlement to the Cypriot problem.

Source: Statement, issued by the Spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan, delivered by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser for Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto, in Nicosia on 24 April 2004. [ON-LINE]. [New York]: United Nations, [11.05.2005]. Press Release SG/SM/9269. Disponible sur <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sgsm9269.doc.htm>.

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Statement, issued by the spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan, delivered by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser for Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto, in Nicosia on 24 April 2004

The Secretary-General notes the outcome of the separate simultaneous referenda held today in Cyprus on the settlement plan finalized on 31 March 2004. Since it was approved in the Turkish Cypriot referendum but not in the Greek Cypriot referendum, the Foundation Agreement will not enter into force.

The Secretary-General respects the outcome of the two referenda. He knows that for many Cypriots the decision how to vote was a difficult one. The goal of the effort over the last four and a half years has been to bring about reunification so as to enable a reunited Cyprus to join the European Union. That goal has not been achieved. A unique and historic chance to resolve the Cyprus problem has been missed.

The Secretary-General intends to give careful thought to the implications of today's result. Meanwhile, Cyprus will remain divided and militarized as it accedes to the European Union, and the benefits of a settlement will not be realized.

The Secretary-General applauds the Turkish Cypriots, who approved the plan notwithstanding the significant sacrifices that it entailed for many of them. He regrets that the Turkish Cypriots will not equally enjoy the benefits of EU membership as of 1 May 2004, but he hopes that ways will be found to ease the plight in which the people find themselves through no fault of their own.

Together with a broad cross-section of the international community, the Secretary-General remains convinced that the settlement plan put to the two sides in today's referenda represents a fair, viable and carefully balanced compromise - one that conforms with the long-agreed parameters for a solution and with the Security Council's vision for a settlement, and meets the minimum requirements of all concerned. Clearly, a large majority of the Greek Cypriot electorate did not share that judgement today. He hopes that they may nevertheless arrive at a different view in the fullness of time, after a profound and sober assessment of today's decision. For a settlement to the long-standing Cyprus problem would benefit the people of Cyprus, as well as the region and the wider international community.

The Secretary-General will report to the Security Council in due course. The Council may wish to evaluate the outcome and its implications.

The Secretary-General appreciates the strong backing that the plan received from many political figures on both sides. He is grateful that Greece and Turkey, the Security Council, the European Union and the broader international community stood ready to throw their support behind the Cypriots and work to ensure full implementation. Above all, he is thankful to his Special Adviser and his outstanding team, as well as for the dedication of many people from all walks of life in Cyprus, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike, who struggled for reunification and reconciliation.