

## Protocol meeting of the Mouftis of Turkish Cypriots with the Archbishop of Cyprus

His Beatitude, the Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos, on Monday, 20 April 2015, at noon, received the Mouftis of the Turkish Cypriots, Dr. Talip Atalay, who made this protocol visit in order to offer his greetings on the occasion of the Paschal Feast.

His Beatitude, on the occasion of Mouftis' visit, offered a meal at the Holy Archbishopric for the Moufti and for his companions, and for the representatives of the Swedish Embassy. Mouftis had the opportunity to speak with His Beatitude and to wish him all the best on the occasion of the great feast of the Orthodox Church, the Resurrection of our Lord.

The meeting of the Archbishop and the Mouftis took place with the contribution of the Office of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process under the auspices of the Swedish Embassy.

During the statements that His Beatitude gave to the media, he referred to the character and the content of the Mouftis' visit. He stated that, as always, with his presence here with us, we have the chance to exchange some ideas about our Monuments, both the Mosques that are situated in our side and our Monuments that are situated in the other area.

His Beatitude pointed out that our desire is to keep them all preserved, both the Muslim Mosques and the Christian Churches, because this is what our culture asks for. Of course, the Monuments belong to us and the Turkish Cypriots, but simultaneously they belong to all the civilised humanity. And we ought to preserve them, to protect them because they are our history, our culture.

Afterwards, the Archbishop Chrysostomos said that we wait for the "elections" that will take place next Sunday, on the other side. Whoever will succeed we will congratulate him and we will ask him to collaborate together.

Next, the Archbishop described the initiative that he will take. "I believe that I will ask for a meeting with the new leader of the Turkish Cypriots and the President Mr. Anastasiades, perhaps at Ledra Palace. We will be at the meeting with the Moufti and we will tell them, for the umpteenth time, that we never had a religious problem in Cyprus. We both have to help to overcome the different issues that we face, in order to exist a mutual understanding. I believe that this is God's will and we have to contribute towards this direction".

In the end, His Beatitude said: "We thank the Mouftis for coming here today to give his greetings. I wish him and his family, and all the Turkish Cypriots, whom we love, all the best. We lived together for centuries, we were happy, and those wonderful days we want to see and live again, for the good sake of Cyprus and the whole world.

The Mouftis explained the reasons of his visit and thanked His Beatitude for his nice words, the hospitality and his wishes towards him, his family and the community of the Turkish Cypriots.

Both His Beatitude and the Mouftis renewed their meeting for the days after the "elections" at the occupied zone, in order for them to meet with the President of the Republic Mr. Nikos Anastasiades and the leader of the Turkish Cypriots, who will result after the second round of the elections.

*Office for Information and Communication*