



**REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**



Nicosia, 24 November 2009

Ms. Anne-Marie Meldgaard,
Chairwoman of the European Affairs Committee,
Folketing,
Denmark.

Dear Colleague,

In the light of the discussions held during the JHA Council of 4 June 2009, concerning the establishment of a European Asylum Support Office (EASO), I should like to bring to your attention the particular interest of the Republic of Cyprus in hosting the Seat of this Office.

Cyprus has been following closely and has provided its full support to the discussions for the establishment of the EASO, holding the firm conviction that such a development will substantially contribute to the fulfillment of the goals set by the European Union in the field of Internal Affairs. Experiencing itself disproportionate pressures on its national asylum system, mainly due to its geographic location and political and demographic situation, the Republic of Cyprus is in a very good position to appreciate the significance of such a measure of solidarity within the European Union, which will benefit especially Mediterranean member states.

Due to its geographical proximity to the Middle East and Africa, one of the world's most politically unstable regions and a major "producer" of both refugees and asylum seekers, Cyprus has acquired a long experience in receiving large numbers of beneficiaries of international protection, mainly from neighbouring countries and has thereby exerted enhanced efforts towards improving efficiency of its competent Services. This is reflected in the sharp decrease, since the beginning of 2008, of pending asylum claims and in Cyprus' overall performance in this field, a fact which has also been acknowledged by the European Union.

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Moreover, Cyprus can operate as a center for providing services to the Middle East, something which also facilitates its connection with the region. Overall, Cyprus is in a position to offer the appropriate infrastructure and services, as well as the best possible conditions, to ensure the proper functioning of the EASO. Last but not least, the possibility for EU experts to operate from a "front-line" member state would offer them a valuable first-hand experience to the best interest of the EASO.

For all these reasons and taking into consideration the Declaration of Heads of State and Government of 2003, regarding the hosting of Seats of new EU Agencies by new member states, I would kindly ask for your solidarity and support to Cyprus' candidacy. I firmly believe that the hosting by the Republic of Cyprus of the Seat of the EASO will not only benefit Cyprus, but also other EU Mediterranean member states facing similar pressures on their asylum systems and, ultimately, the European Union as a whole.

Yours sincerely,



Nicos CLEANTHOUS, M.P.,
Chairman of the House Standing Committee
on European Affairs.