



## PRESS RELEASE

### Preserving Cyprus's Shared Heritage: Completion of Conservation Works Marked at Two Historic Sites

**Nicosia, 2 July 2025** – The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, with financial support from the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage (ALIPH) and co-funding from the European Union, and in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has completed the conservation of two emblematic cultural heritage sites in Cyprus: the Church of St. George of the Latins in Famagusta and the Tuzla Mosque in Larnaca. The project was implemented under the auspices of the UN Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus (OSASG), as part of broader confidence-building measures between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. This collaboration marks the successful completion of conservation efforts that contribute to the preservation of the island's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

Conservation works were implemented by UNDP within the framework of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus, drawing on over a decade of experience in cultural preservation of the island.

The Tuzla Mosque, located in the historic Tuzla neighbourhood of Larnaca, was originally constructed as a medieval church atop a basilica foundation and later converted into a mosque during the Ottoman period. Conservation efforts focused on structural reinforcement, conservation of architectural features, and the preservation of wall paintings uncovered beneath whitewash layers.

The Church of St. George of the Latins, among the oldest surviving Gothic monuments in Famagusta, dates to the late 13th or early 14th century. Severely damaged during the 1570 siege of Famagusta, the church has endured as a significant historical landmark. Conservation efforts focused on structural consolidation, stonework preservation and roof insulation.

Conservation works at both sites commenced in September 2024 and were completed in June 2025.

To mark the successful completion of the project, an event was held with the participation of members of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus and representatives from ALIPH, the European Commission, UNDP, OSASG, the diplomatic community as well as the diverse local communities on the island.

**Bariza Khiari**, Chair of the ALIPH Foundation Board, emphasized:

*"ALIPH is proud to support this initiative, which highlights the power of cultural heritage to bring people together. The rehabilitation of these historic sites was made possible through the joint efforts of representatives from both communities of the island. At ALIPH, we believe that preserving cultural heritage not only safeguards memory but also fosters reconciliation and unity."*

Representing the European Commission, **Jutta Pomoell-Segurola**, Head of Section at the European Commission, underlined:

*“Thanks to the continuous commitment of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, significant progress has been made in building a climate of trust, understanding, and genuine cooperation between communities in Cyprus.”*

**Jakhongir Khaydarov**, Head of Office at UNDP Cyprus, highlighted the importance of strong partnerships:

*“This achievement reflects the strength of our long-standing partnership with the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, the European Union and as well as our new partnership with ALIPH. It is through these trusted collaborations that we turn shared cultural heritage into a platform for dialogue, unity and lasting peace.”*

Speaking on behalf of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus, **Sotos Ktoris**, Greek Cypriot Co-Chair, noted:

*“The restoration of St George of the Latins and Tuzla Mosque reminds us that Cyprus has long been a crossroads of cultures, a land where diversity shaped identity and where communities, despite differences in faith or language, lived side by side, each contributing to a shared heritage. In preserving these sites together, we are doing more than protecting stones. We are affirming our bond with the land, and renewing our commitment to each other. These restored places are no longer silent; they speak of trust and reconciliation, of respect, and of the possibility of a more peaceful future on this island.*

**Ali Tuncay**, Turkish Cypriot Co-Chair of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus, remarked:

*“ALIPH’s support for the preservation of the St. George of the Latins Church in Famagusta and the Tuzla Mosque in Larnaca reflects its mission to safeguard cultural heritage in historically complex regions. These monuments, which stand as reminders of the island’s diverse and intertwined past, also embody the vision of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus, which works to foster dialogue, mutual understanding, and shared responsibility. By backing the restoration of sites with religious and historical value, ALIPH helps promote respect for cultural diversity and contributes to the creation of a more trusting and open atmosphere. This effort underscores the role of heritage as a powerful connector between people and a foundation for long-term peace, reconciliation, and cooperation in Cyprus.”*

This is a project of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus, funded by the ALIPH Foundation, with financial support from the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme.

Through its work, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus aims not only to restore monuments but to promote intercultural dialogue, reconciliation, and a culture of peace. Each conservation site stands as a testament to Cyprus’s shared history and the enduring value of collaboration across communities.

### **About the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage**

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage was established in 2008 under the auspices of the United Nations to provide a mutually acceptable mechanism for the preservation of the immovable cultural heritage of Cyprus. In 2009, the Advisory Board was set up by a decision of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and approved by the two leaders as the consultative body of the Committee. The aim of the Board is to protect, preserve and facilitate the preservation, physical protection and restoration (including research, study and survey) of the island's common heritage. This mechanism allows for the practical aspects of preservation to be considered in a non-political manner so that practical measures can be taken to improve the situation on the ground.

The Technical Committees were created with the purpose of building trust between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus, thus facilitating the peace talks supported by the United Nations Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General (OSASG-Cyprus).

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### **About ALIPH**

Our cultural heritage is at risk. Conflict, climate change, and disasters are threatening what reflects our identities and tells our collective history. Art and artifacts, historical buildings and archaeological sites, stories and traditions... cultural heritage is part of our common humanity and a compass for our future. The International alliance for the protection of heritage (ALIPH) is the main global fund dedicated to its protection in conflict, post-conflict, and crisis areas. ALIPH supports the people on the ground who take concrete measures to protect or restore museums, sites and monuments, and intangible heritage in the most challenging contexts. ALIPH is a first responder in times of conflict and crisis, providing quick and flexible support within hours or days to prevent heritage from being lost forever. Since its creation in Geneva in 2017, ALIPH has supported over 500 projects in 54 countries. The Foundation carries out its mission thanks to the support of its nine member States (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Morocco, France, China, Luxembourg, Cyprus, and Uzbekistan), its three private members (Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan, Getty Trust, and Fondation Gandur pour l'Art), and a dozen other donors. ALIPH is committed to supporting professionals, communities, and their legacies to ensure sustainable development and to build peace.

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International  
alliance for  
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### About the European Union

The Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, based on Council Regulation 389/2006, aims at facilitating the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community, with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island, on improving contacts between the two communities and with the EU, and on preparation for the EU body of laws (also referred to as *acquis communautaire*).

**For more information please visit:**

[Support to the Turkish Cypriot community - European Commission](#)

[EU Infopoint on Facebook](#) - <http://www.abbilgi.eu/en> - <http://www.abbilgi.eu/tr/>

### About the United Nations Development Programme

UNDP aims to contribute and support the peace-building process in Cyprus and to enhance cooperation between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriot by implementing a range of confidence building measures.

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**More resources:** <https://www.undp.org/cyprus>