

Press Release

“Berghof Process”

Nicosia, Cyprus (21. – 25. September 2007)

The Berghof Process in Cyprus is inspired by seven years of experiences as an organiser and facilitator of Georgian-Abkhazian informal dialogue meetings. The workshop is part of a series of meetings on the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and peace process bringing together people with government backgrounds, politicians and public figures from both sides of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. It was conducted in Nicosia, Cyprus from 21. – 25. September 2007.

By organizing the informal meeting in Cyprus, the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support intends to combine a “study visit dynamic” with a “dialog dynamic”. Cyprus accounts for a very complex development between two communities as well as a nuanced and complex international involvement. We perceive the Cyprus case a source of inspiration for the participants and a prism through which core topics of today’s Georgian-Abkhaz situation can be accessed by the participants. Cyprus does not provide ready made blue prints for dealing with the Georgian-Abkhaz situation. However, similarities as well as differences provide the basis for dialogue among Georgian and Abkhaz.

In the first phase of the workshop participants met with Cypriot politicians, academics, and civil activists both from the Southern and Northern part of Cyprus. Cypriot politicians included representatives from power holding parties and the opposition pertaining to both sides. Experiencing the easy crossing between Nicosia South and Nicosia North and the freedom of movement that was established on the island in 2003 made undoubtful a great impression on Georgian and Abkhaz participants alike. Moreover, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission Mr. Møller met with the group giving insights into the UN’s peacekeeping mandate and how it relates to the negotiation process facilitated by the UN.

The workshop put particular focus on the Annan Peace Plan for Cyprus that was put forward to the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot community in two separate referenda in May 2004. For deepening the insides in this comprehensive peace plan a summary of the Annan Plan that was originally published by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) for informing the Cypriot public was translated into Russian language and provided to participants.

The dialogue phase that focused on Georgian-Abkhaz issues was shaped by insights participants had gained from the Cyprus experiences. The group discussed elements that relate to the generation of demographic security, the return of refugees / IDPs and the freedom of property. Both Abkhaz and Georgian participants agreed that the strategy of “territorial adjustments” that was suggested in the Annan Plan is not a viable strategy in the Georgian-Abkhaz context.

The Abkhaz participants in the workshop were Viacheslav Chirikba, Alkhas Cholokua, Manana Gurgulia, Daur Kove, Batal Kobachia. The Georgian participants were Archil Gegeshidze, George Khutsishvili, Shota Malashkhia. Otar Toidze, Paata Zakareishvili. As an international resource person that relates both to Cyprus and to Georgia-Abkhazia, Mirko Schilbach (German Federal Foreign Office, Berlin) participated in the workshop. All participants took part in their individual capacity, not representing any organisation or institution.

The workshop was organised by the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support (BFPS). It was facilitated by Oliver Wolleh (BFPS), Wolfram Zunzer (BFPS) and Luis Peral (Toledo International Center for Peace, Madrid) The Team was supported by Susanne Breda (BFPS) and Mehves Beyidoglu (Cyprus). It was funded by the German Federal Foreign Office through Zivik.

Dr. Oliver Wolleh

Berghof Foundation For Peace Support, Altensteinstr. 48 a, 14195 Berlin
T +49-30-844 154-30; Email: oliver.wolleh@berghof-peacesupport.org