

Mr. Mavros (Cyprus):

At the outset, I would like to express our deep sadness about the death of Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, a prominent and highly experienced diplomat who skilfully represented Russia at the United Nations for more than a decade and contributed to the promotion of the United Nations agenda.

It is an honour to participate in today's discussion focusing on conflicts in Europe and their impact on international peace and stability. I would like to start by joining the previous speakers in conveying my Government's congratulations to the Ukrainian presidency of the Security Council for convening today's important meeting.

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (EU), and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

As a country that since its independence has relied heavily on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations in maintaining its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, Cyprus fully abides by the principles of the United Nations and international law. In the same way, Cyprus shares the concerns already expressed as regards the multiple challenges putting international peace and stability at risk. To that end, Cyprus fully subscribes to the statement made on behalf of the European Union, as regards the importance of further strengthening cooperation between regional and international organizations. Closer cooperation and strategic coordination at the regional and international level can lead to a more targeted and effective response from the international community to existing threats and dangerous developments.

We would like to thank Ukraine for including Cyprus in the concept note of today's open debate (see S/2017/108, annex). Cyprus has been on the agenda of the Security Council since 1963. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus is an example, in our view, of an efficient, cost-effective peacekeeping mission and a pioneer for gender parity in peace operations. The political track of the mission also constitutes an example of positive collaboration with the European Union, whose role is catalytic in the efforts for a solution that will be fully compatible with Cyprus rights and obligations as an EU member State.

Cyprus reiterates its profound appreciation to the Security Council and the Secretary-General for their continuous efforts towards the peaceful and lasting solution of the Cyprus question, in line with international law, the relevant Security Council resolutions and the European Union acquis. The ongoing negotiating process has reached a critical juncture. The convening of a conference on Cyprus, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to address the international aspects of the problem — namely, security, which comprises the most fundamental elements of an eventual settlement, specifically the

withdrawal of foreign troops, and the abolition of the anachronistic system of guarantees — is a watershed in the whole process.

We sincerely hope that all parties involved will demonstrate the requisite degree of commitment and political will so that the effort will yield results. We are most grateful for the Secretary-General's personal involvement and for the Security Council's strong signal of unity and support for the effort. Since the issues at hand fall within the remit of the Security Council, as the body with primary responsibility for the preservation of international peace and security, we consider it important to stress that the Council has an inherently particular role to exercise in that regard.

The successful outcome of the ongoing negotiation process in Cyprus has the potential to establish Cyprus as an international paradigm of peaceful co-existence and prosperous collaboration between its citizens, irrespective of their ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Such a development will not only transform Cyprus into a model country of stability and predictability for the region, but will also bear out the catalytic role of the Security Council in promoting international peace and stability.