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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

Twenty-second report on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 866/2004 of 29 April 2004 and the situation resulting from its application covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025

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Council Regulation (EC) No 866/2004 on a regime under Article 2 of Protocol 10 to the Act of Accession¹ (the ‘Green Line Regulation’) entered into force on 1 May 2004. It sets out the terms under which provisions of EU law apply to the movement of persons, goods and services across the line between the areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Republic of Cyprus Government does not exercise effective control and the areas in which it does. In order to ensure the effectiveness of these rules, their application has been extended to the boundary between the areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Republic of Cyprus Government does not exercise effective control and the United Kingdom (UK) Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA)².

This report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025.

In 2025, the Commission maintained a constructive dialogue with the relevant authorities of the Republic of Cyprus and the Sovereign Base Area Administration on the implementation of the Regulation. It also maintained constructive dialogue with the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce.

1. CROSSING OF PERSONS

1.1. Crossing at authorised crossing points

The Regulation provides a legal framework for the crossings of Cypriots, other EU citizens and third country nationals who cross the Green Line (‘the Line’) at authorised crossing points. In 2025 the number of crossings by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots increased compared with the previous year.

According to data from the Republic of Cyprus Police covering the reporting period, 1 453 135 crossings (previously 1 346 121) by Greek Cypriots and 833 786 crossings (previously 822 443) by Greek Cypriot vehicles were recorded from the areas of the Republic of Cyprus under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus Government to the areas of the Republic of Cyprus not under the Government’s effective control. In the same period, 1 983 610 crossings (previously 1 814 647) by Turkish Cypriots and 748 061 crossings (previously 705 532) by Turkish Cypriot vehicles were recorded in the other direction³. The Republic of Cyprus reported that due to technical problems from January to March, data on vehicle crossings were not wholly accurate.

The number of EU citizens (other than Cypriots) and third country nationals crossing the Line also increased. During the reporting period, 2 053 958 crossings (previously 1 777 946) were made by EU citizens (other than Cypriots) and third country nationals in both directions.

These figures do not include data on persons and vehicles crossing from the northern part of Cyprus at the Pergamos and Strovilia crossing points, which are under the authority of the ESBA.

1 OJ L 161, 30.4.2004, p. 128, as last amended by Council Regulation (EU) No 685/2013 of 15 July 2013 (OJ L 196, 19.7.2013, p. 1).

2 See Protocol relating to the Sovereign Base Areas of the United Kingdom in Cyprus to the Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

3 The Republic of Cyprus authorities do not keep records on the return of Greek Cypriots to the government-controlled areas or the return of Turkish Cypriots to the northern part of Cyprus.

For these, the ESBA reported that 594 172 crossings (previously 687 007) by Greek Cypriots and 385 347 crossings (previously 428 204) by Greek Cypriot vehicles were recorded to the northern part of Cyprus. At the same time, 747 130 crossings (previously 708 810) by Turkish Cypriots and 405 977 crossings (previously 378 270) by Turkish Cypriot vehicles were recorded in the other direction. Moreover, 963 292 EU citizens (other than Cypriots) and third country nationals crossed the Line in both directions.

In 2025, the number of Republic of Cyprus police officers working at the crossing points increased to 108, compared with 107 in 2024.

The figures gathered by the Turkish Cypriot community in 2025 indicate a decrease in the number of crossings by Greek Cypriots to 2 341 029 (previously 2 767 805) and by Greek Cypriot vehicles to 1 340 713 (previously 1 579 058) from the government-controlled areas to the northern part of Cyprus. They indicate an increase in the number of crossings by Turkish Cypriots to 3 152 743 (previously 2 933 833) and by Turkish Cypriot vehicles to 1 395 796 (previously 1 280 653) in the other direction. According to the statistics provided, 1 960 545 (previously 2 004 017) EU citizens (other than Cypriots) and third country nationals crossed from the government-controlled areas to the northern part of Cyprus in 2025.

It was reported that high prices and inflation in the Turkish Cypriot community discouraged Greek Cypriots from crossing the Green Line for personal shopping and encouraged Turkish Cypriots to cross the Line in the other direction.

Long queues continued to be reported at the Agios Dhometios crossing point. The Republic of Cyprus authorities noted that additional human resources had been deployed to facilitate crossings. In December 2025, works funded under the aid programme for the Turkish Cypriot community began to increase the number of lanes at this crossing point.

Turkish Cypriot buses carrying EU citizens were not permitted by the Republic of Cyprus authorities to cross into the government-controlled areas unless they had fully *acquis*-compliant documents issued by the Republic of Cyprus authorities. As mentioned in previous years, the Republic of Cyprus authorities have indicated that they have put in place arrangements to facilitate the process for Turkish Cypriots to obtain roadworthiness certificates, authorisations and professional driving licences; the licences are granted free of charge after submission of applications (translated into Turkish).

The Republic of Cyprus should continue ensuring the crossing of persons in line with Regulation (EC) No 866/2004.

The 14 confidence building measures announced in 2024 by President Christodoulides continued to be implemented. The widening of the Agios Dhometios crossing point and increased staffing at the crossing point were particularly relevant.

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) continued to facilitate the practice of religious worship across the Green Line by both communities⁴.

4 Report of the UN Secretary-General on UNFICYP [S/2026/8] of 5 January 2026, paragraph 28.

1.2 Irregular migration across the Green Line and asylum

Republic of Cyprus figures for 2025 indicated a decrease in the number of migrants who irregularly crossed the Line from the areas not under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus to the government-controlled areas. In 2025, 2 433 irregular migrants crossed the Line in this way; the equivalent figures for 2024, 2023 and 2022 were 3 319, 6 793 and 16 627 respectively. Despite the positive trend, irregular migration across the Green Line remains a major concern requiring continued vigilance.

The Commission reiterates that while the Green Line Regulation provides for checks on all persons crossing the Line, migrants who irregularly crossed the Line should have access to mechanisms enabling them to apply for international protection should they so wish.

The Turkish Cypriot community noted that efforts had continued in the northern part of Cyprus to prevent irregular migration. In 2025, 5 230 persons⁵ were prevented from entering the non-government-controlled areas of Cyprus, and 1 754 persons⁶ who had been apprehended within the northern part of Cyprus were deported.

Representatives from the two communities met within a bicomunal Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters under UN auspices, which served as a channel for the exchange of information on crime and police matters. As an extension to this committee, the two communities continued to use two ‘Joint Contact Rooms’ in Nicosia and Pyla, which provide a forum for the exchange of information on criminal matters⁷.

The Republic of Cyprus police described cooperation with other relevant Republic of Cyprus Government departments and the ESBA administration as very good.

Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA)

Irregular migration from the non-government-controlled areas of Cyprus via the ESBA decreased in 2025. In 2025, 33 migrants were apprehended after having crossed the Line irregularly⁸. 4 609 persons were not allowed to cross, of whom the greatest number (843) were Israeli citizens, followed by Russian citizens (735), Ukrainian citizens (505) and Turkish citizens (505). In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Protocol relating to the Sovereign Base Areas of the United Kingdom in Cyprus annexed to the Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the ESBA authorities refused to allow foreign nationals who arrived via the northern part of Cyprus to cross the Line⁹. These persons were directed to crossing points outside the ESBA to undergo checks in line with the Republic of Cyprus’s crossing requirements.

Sovereign Base Area (SBA) officers described their cooperation with the Republic of Cyprus as very good.

Away from the crossing points, SBA police conducted risk-based, intelligence-led patrols to counter irregular migration. These patrols were supplemented with patrols by SBA customs and by military personnel.

Four ‘unauthorised crossing points’ in or near the village of Pergamos, which are used by local residents and farmers, are particularly difficult to control. As mentioned in previous reports,

5 Nationals by country: Iran: 753; Pakistan: 732; Iraq: 516; Türkiye: 485; Somalia: 322; other: 2 422.

6 Nationals by country: Türkiye: 423; Nigeria: 385; Bangladesh: 198; Syria: 160; Pakistan: 133; other: 455.

7 Report of the UN Secretary-General on UNFICYP [S/2026/8] of 5 January 2026, paragraph 20.

8 All of the 33 irregular migrants intercepted within the ESBA applied for asylum and were handed over to the Republic of Cyprus authorities.

9 Third country nationals (other than UK citizens) are permitted to cross only if they are engaged in a defence-related activity or are family members of a person who is engaged in such activity.

these ‘unauthorised crossing points’ remain an area of concern and a suitable solution in line with Article 7 of the Protocol should be found. During the reporting period, the SBA authorities conducted spontaneous checks on persons using roads linking to these crossing points.

2. CROSSING OF GOODS

2.1. Value of trade

Under Article 4 of the Green Line Regulation, goods may be introduced from non-government-controlled areas into government-controlled areas, provided that they meet the criteria set out in that Article¹⁰ and are accompanied by a document issued by the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce. Pursuant to Article 8 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1480/2004¹¹, the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce and the Republic of Cyprus authorities reported on a monthly basis on the type, volume and value of goods for which accompanying documents had been issued.

According to statistics provided by the Republic of Cyprus, the total value of trade in goods with accompanying documents that actually crossed the Line decreased by 5.3% in 2025 to EUR 14 430 669 (previously EUR 15 238 221).

According to statistics provided by the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, the total value of goods for which accompanying documents had been issued amounted to EUR 15 866 752 (previously EUR 18 222 590). Compared with 2024, this is a decrease of 12.9% in the overall value of goods for which accompanying documents had been issued.

Trade from the government-controlled areas to the northern part of Cyprus is not regulated by the Green Line Regulation. However, it is encouraged for economic reasons as it contributes to building relations and trust between the two communities. In 2025, this trade increased by around 13.5%, from EUR 1 314 705 in 2024 to EUR 1 491 582 in 2025, according to figures from the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Trade from the government-controlled areas to the northern part of Cyprus represented 10.3% of the trade in the opposite direction (8.6% in 2024).

The Turkish Cypriot community continued to apply a trade system that broadly ‘mirrors’ the conditions of the Green Line Regulation. In addition, most goods can only be traded from the government-controlled areas to the northern part of Cyprus once an ‘import permit’ has been issued and ‘value added tax’ has been levied even though it has already been levied in the government-controlled areas. This system discourages bicomunal trade; for example, trade in mushrooms from the government-controlled areas to the non-government-controlled areas could not take place during the reporting period.

2.2 Type of goods

In 2025, the nature of traded products remained generally stable and no new products were introduced. Building and construction materials remained the most traded item, followed by furniture, plastics, scrap and waste. There was a notable decrease in trade in fruit and vegetables; in particular, there was no trade in potatoes.

10 Article 4(1) sets out that the goods need to be wholly obtained in the areas not under effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus or have undergone their last, substantial, economically justified processing or working in an undertaking equipped for that purpose in the areas not under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

11 Commission Regulation (EC) No 1480/2004 of 10 August 2004 (OJ L 272, 20.8.2004, p. 3).

2.3. Irregularities

The Republic of Cyprus brought to the Commission's attention two cases of irregularity that occurred during the reporting period.

On 5 February a consignment of sinks was rejected and on 30 May a consignment of emulsion paints was rejected. Both rejections were due to incorrect performance certificates.

2.4. Obstacles and difficulties concerning the movement of goods

Obstacles to trade across the Line continued and are one of the reasons for the current limited level of trade. During the reporting period, Green Line trade decreased mainly due to the increase in prices in the non-government-controlled areas and restrictions faced by businesses in the construction products sector. The Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Interior maintained its market surveillance activities. However, limited staff capacity led to some delays. This forms part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to help Green Line trade reach its full potential.

As mentioned in previous reports¹², the issue of Turkish Cypriot commercial vehicles crossing to the government-controlled areas is yet to be solved. At present, Turkish Cypriot commercial vehicles that weigh more than 7.5 tonnes can cross the Line only provided they have fully *acquis*-compliant documents issued by the Republic of Cyprus. As mentioned in previous years, the Republic of Cyprus authorities have informed the Commission that they have put in place measures to make it easier for Turkish Cypriots to fulfil some requirements, such as obtaining roadworthiness certificates, authorisations and professional driving licences. A solution to the issue would significantly contribute to increasing the level of trade as it would ease the transport of goods. It would also strengthen contact between Cypriot economic operators, thus helping increase trust between both communities. The Commission will continue to engage with the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus and with the Turkish Cypriot community to identify a solution to this problem.

During the reporting period, no further progress was made on the issue of processed food products of non-animal origin crossing the Line. No trade in processed foods of non-animal origin took place. The Commission and the Republic of Cyprus continued their constructive dialogue on enabling trade in more types of processed food of non-animal origin. Materials that come into contact with food (plastic bags for bread) continued to be traded across the Green Line during the reporting period and, according to data from the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, were the tenth most traded product in 2025.

As in previous years, some Turkish Cypriot traders continued to report difficulties in having their products stocked in shops and in advertising their products and services in the government-controlled areas, which hinders trade. In addition, traders from both communities referred to several administrative problems when trying to enter into business with the other community..

The inability to transfer funds between banks in the government-controlled areas and banks in the areas not under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus Government continued to hamper Green Line trade. In 2023, the Central Bank of Cyprus issued a circular letter to all credit institutions clarifying that Turkish Cypriots with Republic of Cyprus passports or identity cards are entitled to open a payment account with basic features provided that all other due diligence requirements for customer identification are satisfied. Turkish Cypriots continued, however, to report difficulties when trying to open accounts with commercial banks and a very limited number of Turkish Cypriots have been able to open such accounts. In addition, Turkish Cypriot businesses were unable to open bank accounts in the government-controlled areas. The

12 See for instance the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first annual reports on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 866/2004 and the situation resulting from its application.

Commission will continue to engage with the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus and relevant stakeholders to find a solution to this issue.

The restrictions imposed by the Turkish Central Bank on Turkish commercial banks cooperating with commercial banks in the Republic of Cyprus is an obstacle that further complicates the matter.

2.5. Smuggling of goods

Smuggling of goods persisted, reflecting the difficulty of controlling irregular movements across the Line.

In 2025, the Republic of Cyprus made 2 870 seizures of smuggled goods (previously 3 170), a decrease of 9.5%. Compared with previous years, there was a decrease in smuggling of animal and dairy products and an increase in the volume of other agricultural products smuggled. There was a decrease in the quantity of cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco seized by the Republic of Cyprus customs at the Line: 721 024 cigarettes and 198 710 g of hand-rolling tobacco (previously 727 362 cigarettes and 235 989 g). In addition, 232 136 electronic cigarette cartridges and 267 386 g of narghile tobacco were also seized. Smuggling of alcohol decreased while smuggling of goods violating intellectual property rights fell significantly. Other items seized included cars, fuel, drugs, medicines and pesticides. Thirty-five prosecutions for smuggling were brought in the District Court. Cases of smuggling of small quantities of cigarettes were usually dealt with through the imposition of an administrative penalty and forfeiture.

In 2025, the ESBA authorities recorded a decrease in the number of seizures of smuggled goods within the ESBA; there were 661 seizures compared to 997 in 2024.

As regards the traditional supply of the Turkish Cypriot population of the village of Pyla, located in the buffer zone (Article 4(10) of the Green Line Regulation), the quantities of construction materials, fish, cigarettes, etc. were monitored and recorded by the ESBA administration.

2.6. Facilitation of trade

The Commission continued to seek ways of enhancing trade across the Line.

During the reporting period, the Commission continued discussions with the Republic of Cyprus authorities. The Commission also held discussions with the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce on Green Line trade.

The Commission continued to provide technical and project assistance to Turkish Cypriot farmers and dairies to enable them to comply with the requirements for registering Halloumi/Hellim produced in the northern part of Cyprus as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). Bureau Veritas, which was appointed in September 2021 as the delegated body responsible for conducting PDO checks throughout the island, continued its inspection work. The Commission informal Working Group on Halloumi/Hellim met on 29 January, 11 June and 26 September 2025. Minutes of the Working Group are published at: [Green Line Regulation - European Commission](#).

In the light of a report by an independent expert, the Commission authorised trade in honey across the Green Line. However, no trade took place; this was ascribed to the high price of Turkish Cypriot honey.

During 2025, the Commission continued to deploy EU Member State experts through the TAIEX

instrument to provide support for trade across the Green Line, according to the mandate set out in the Green Line Regulation. TAIEX experts were involved in carrying out regular phytosanitary inspections of fruits and vegetables (especially potatoes), taking honey samples for analysis and producing a regularly updated list of fishing vessels whose catch can be traded across the Green Line.

Working in cooperation with the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, the EU One Stop Shop continued to provide information and technical assistance to businesses and individuals who are interested in trading across the Green Line, and raised awareness of Green Line trade by organising events and networking opportunities for producers and traders.

Some Turkish Cypriot consignors of fresh fish continued to report difficulties meeting the deadlines set for veterinary inspections of fresh fish at the Agios Dhometios crossing point. The Republic of Cyprus expressed significant concerns at the nature of some fresh fish consignments. The Commission is looking into these concerns.

The Commission encourages economic operators to take advantage of business opportunities and welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce.

2.7. Union goods taken back to the areas under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus after passing through the areas which are not under its effective control

The Republic of Cyprus authorities reported that 1 262 items were taken back to the government-controlled areas after having passed through the non-government-controlled areas.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In 2025 there was an increase in crossings by Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, EU nationals (other than Cypriots) and third country nationals.

The number of persons irregularly crossing the Line decreased in 2025, continuing the downward trend of recent years. Nevertheless, irregular migration across the Line still calls for close vigilance. There is a need to allocate sufficient resources to carry out checks on persons and surveillance activities along the Line.

In 2025, the value of trade across the Line decreased by 5.3% from EUR 15 238 221 in 2024 to EUR 14 430 669 in 2025. The value of goods for which accompanying documents were issued decreased by 12.9% from EUR 18 222 590 to EUR 15 866 752. Building and construction materials remained the most traded item, followed by furniture, plastics, scrap and waste.

The Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce continued to cooperate with a view to bringing economic benefits to both communities.

The Republic of Cyprus continued to authorise the crossing of the Line by Turkish Cypriot commercial vehicles weighing more than 7.5 tonnes if they are *acquis*-compliant. The Republic of Cyprus authorities noted that they have put in place arrangements making it easier for Turkish Cypriots to obtain roadworthiness certificates, authorisations and professional driving licences. The Commission will continue to engage with the Republic of Cyprus authorities to find a solution to this problem.

During the reporting period no additional types of processed food of non-animal origin were

permitted for trade across the Line. The Commission will continue its dialogue with the Republic of Cyprus to enable all types of processed foods of non-animal origin to be traded across the Line.

Overall, the Commission is of the opinion that trade across the Line has the potential to increase. Addressing the obstacles to trade identified in this report would help to facilitate this growth, and the Commission welcomes any positive developments in this direction. The Commission hopes that the work of the two Chambers to improve contacts between the two business communities will lead to increased economic ties.

Against this background, the Commission continues to rely on the good cooperation with the Republic of Cyprus and the ESBA to ensure effective implementation of the Green Line Regulation. The Commission will continue to monitor the implementation of the Regulation.