

## ***Resolution tabled by the House Committee on Education Affairs***

### ***The House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus,***

*Having with great concern* been informed of the intentions of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) charity institution to terminate the operation of the Melkonian Institute as a comprehensive Armenian secondary school, as was testified during the meeting of the Education Committee,

*Noting* further information that the termination of the school's operation may be connected to the intent to change the use of the grounds for the purpose of financial gain or even the appropriation of all or part of the estate of the Melkonian brothers,

*Considering* the Melkonian Institute to be an inseparable part not only of the Armenian, but of the whole of the Cypriot cultural and historical heritage,

*Convinced* that the school as it operates today serves a significant educational and cultural purpose contributing to the education and cultivation of young Armenians, but also reinforcing their unique identity, and that there should only be thoughts and efforts to support it,

*Judging* that the present day is not the time to close but to open schools and *considering* that it is utterly unacceptable that the prospect of termination of the Melkonian Institute's operations will leave the registered students literally abandoned, as there is no other Armenian secondary school in this country,

*Noting* the Cypriot government's intention, as was declared in recent days, to allocate further economic assistance to this educational institute,

### ***Votes on the following, whereby it:***

1. *Expresses* extreme dissatisfaction and protests the decision to terminate the operations of the Melkonian Institute.
2. *Considers* as unacceptable any effort that will adversely affect the Armenian education and the cultivation of Armenian tradition on Cypriot soil.
3. *Refutes* every notion to alter the historic site that includes the main buildings as well as the surrounding areas, including the boarding house.
4. *Condemns* every intention and effort to change the purpose of use of the inheritance of the Melkonian brothers.
5. *Calls* on the AGBU institution that has the operational responsibility to suspend every relevant decision.
6. *Calls* on this institution to come to a constructive dialogue with the representatives of the Armenian community of Cyprus as well as the directly interested parties, teachers, parents, graduates of the school, and also the Cypriot authorities, who would be willing to contribute towards the settlement of any possible operational problems.
7. *Calls* on the AGBU institution to constructively review the proposal of the interested parties to operate the school under their own responsibility, especially taking into consideration the declared intention of the government to support this effort.

8. *Calls* on the Cypriot government to speed up the declaration of the school buildings as protected heritage buildings.
9. *Asks* the government to declare the whole of the grounds of the Melkonian Institute as a site of national historical and cultural importance, in order to prevent any effort to alter its purpose of use.
10. *Calls* on the Cypriot government to undertake the additional necessary initiatives, so as to prevent the *fait accompli* that the operators from New York are attempting to establish.
11. *Expects* of the Cypriot government to support the school as much as possible, in order to safeguard its operation even under the control of the Armenians of Cyprus and their representative bodies.

[Approved unanimously by the House of Representatives plenary session on Friday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004]