



Cyprus and Serbia Sign Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

The Minister of Defence of the Republic of Cyprus, Vasilis Palmas, hosted the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, Bratislav Gašić, who paid an official visit to Cyprus. During their meeting, the two Ministers signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between Cyprus and Serbia. This agreement strengthens the institutional framework governing bilateral defence cooperation and facilitates the implementation of joint activities in defence and security. It represents an important milestone in the deepening of relations between the two countries.

Talks focused on the current state of defence cooperation as well as prospects for its further expansion, particularly in the areas of training, operational cooperation, and defence equipment programs. The Ministers also exchanged views on Serbia–EU relations, especially in light of the upcoming Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and discussed international and regional developments in the Western Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, and the Middle East.

Minister Palmas emphasized the long-standing friendship and shared values linking Cyprus and Serbia, rooted in historical ties and mutual understanding. He highlighted that the SOFA agreement further consolidates strategic trust and enables more effective practical cooperation. He also briefed the Serbian Defence Minister on the security challenges faced by Cyprus, including the impact of Turkey's revisionist policies and increasing aggression, reiterating Cyprus' firm commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes on the basis of international law, UNCLOS, and UN Security Council resolutions.

Minister Palmas reaffirmed Cyprus' principled position of non-recognition of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo, stressing Cyprus' readiness to support initiatives that promote stability and constructive dialogue in the Western Balkans. Referring to Serbia's European integration process, he underlined that Cyprus will continue to support Serbia's EU accession path and encourage greater alignment with EU policies, which would enhance regional peace and security and strengthen Serbia's position as a key European partner. He added that as Cyprus prepares to assume the Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Ministry of Defence is approaching security challenges with responsibility and a spirit of cooperation, aiming to strengthen European security and promote dialogue with partners.

In his remarks, Minister Gašić expressed deep appreciation for Cyprus' unwavering support for Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and for its steadfast refusal to recognize Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, despite longstanding pressure. He stressed the strong bonds of friendship and respect between the two nations and underlined Serbia's support for the territorial integrity of Cyprus and its commitment to a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus issue. He also noted the participation of Serbian personnel in the UN peacekeeping mission in Cyprus as evidence of Serbia's contribution to peace and stability.

Minister Gašić described the signing of the SOFA agreement as a significant development for future military cooperation and reaffirmed Serbia's intention to further strengthen military and defence-industrial ties with Cyprus. He also expressed gratitude for Cyprus' support of Serbia's EU perspective and participation in major international events in Belgrade. Both Ministers highlighted the excellent relations between their governments and leaders and agreed to continue working towards deeper cooperation across all areas of mutual interest. Minister Gašić concluded by inviting Minister Palmas to visit Serbia in the coming year to continue strengthening bilateral defence cooperation.



Visit of the Minister of Defence Vasilis Palmas to Israel



Minister Palmas underlined that, in view of the upcoming Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus will focus on strengthening European unity and promoting strategic stability and regional cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Within this framework, Cyprus will seek to further deepen its cooperation with Israel, encouraging dialogue and collaboration in areas of mutual interest, while at the same time supporting regional peace, stability and respect for international norms and international law. During his stay in Israel, the Minister of Defence also visited the Civil-Military Coordination Center (CMCC), which operates as a central coordination hub between military, humanitarian, international and other actors. The CMCC supports the implementation of the ceasefire and the ongoing stabilization efforts in Gaza. On this occasion, Minister Palmas met with the CMCC Commander, Lieutenant General Patrick D. Frank. The Minister of Defence, Mr. Vasilis Palmas, paid an official visit to Israel on 15–16 December, during which he met with his Israeli counterpart, Mr. Israel Katz. During the meeting, the two Ministers exchanged views on security developments in Cyprus and Israel, as well as in the wider region of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. They also discussed issues relating to bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the fields of defence and security.

EU Foreign Affairs Council in Defence Ministers' Configuration, Brussels

The Minister of Defence, Mr. Vasilis Palmas, participated in the EU Foreign Affairs Council in Defence Ministers' configuration, which took place in Brussels on the 1st of December 2025. During the meeting, the Defence Ministers exchanged views on the latest developments regarding efforts to end the war in Ukraine and assessed progress made in implementing the EU Defence Readiness Agenda, including the Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030.

Subsequently, Mr. Palmas took part in the meeting of the Steering Board of the European Defence Agency (EDA) in Defence Ministers' configuration. During the meeting, the EDA's annual budget for 2026 was approved, and discussions were held on the implementation of the Agency's medium- and long-term projects.

In his intervention, the Minister highlighted the firm support of the Republic of Cyprus for the vital work undertaken by the Agency and stressed the need to further strengthen its role in implementing the priorities reflected in the conclusions of the European Council and in the Defence White Paper, with the ultimate objective of ensuring Europe's Defence Readiness by 2030.

On the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council, Mr. Palmas held a bilateral meeting with the Italian Minister of Defence, Mr. Guido Crosetto, during which issues of common interest were discussed, as well as ways to further enhance cooperation between Cyprus and Italy in the fields of defence and security.



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EU defence ministers discussed EU military support for Ukraine after an exchange with the Ukrainian Minister of Defence, Denys Shmyhal, and in the presence of NATO Deputy Secretary General, Radmila Shekerinska.

Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and President of the Foreign Affairs Council Ministers discussed funding options for military support to Ukraine, enhancing defence-industrial cooperation and efforts to counter the Russian shadow fleet. The High Representative also updated the Council on ongoing work on EU's contribution to security guarantees for Ukraine.

Concerning funding, EU defence ministers stressed that funding options need to be agreed on as a matter of urgency. The High Representative emphasised that a multi-year solution would be a game-changer for Ukraine's defence as it would mean means a faster end to Putin's war.

Cyprus Conducts Live-Fire Acceptance Trials of Serbian TAMNAVA Multiple Launch Rocket System

On 11 December 2025, the National Guard successfully conducted live-fire acceptance trials of the Serbian-manufactured “TAMNAVA” Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) at the Kiti Firing Range. The tests marked a major milestone in Cyprus’ ongoing defence-modernisation program and confirmed the system’s operational readiness for integration into the country’s artillery forces.

According to Ministry of Defence sources, the introduction of the TAMNAVA system significantly enhances the operational readiness and deterrent capability of the National Guard. The system brings the Cypriot artillery corps up to modern NATO-comparable technological standards, improving both firepower and responsiveness. TAMNAVA is a technologically advanced, fully automated and modular MLRS developed by Serbia’s state-owned defence company Yugoimport SDPR. Named after the Tamnava river region in western Serbia, the system has gained international interest as one of the most flexible and modern rocket artillery platforms currently available for export.

The system is mounted on a high-mobility Kamaz 6560 8×8 truck chassis, allowing rapid deployment across varied terrain. One of its defining strengths is its modular design. TAMNAVA can carry interchangeable rocket pods capable of firing multiple calibres — most notably 122 mm and 267 mm rockets — enabling operators to select the appropriate munitions for different mission profiles. Depending on the rocket type used, operational ranges extend up to approximately 40–70 kilometres, providing long-range strike capability and deep fire support.

Modern automation and fire-control technologies are central to TAMNAVA’s design. The launcher integrates GPS/INS navigation and a fully computerized fire-control system, enabling high accuracy with minimal crew exposure. Preparation and launch procedures can be conducted directly from inside the vehicle’s protected cabin, or remotely from a separate shelter if required. Critically, the system is designed for rapid emplacement and withdrawal, with a full “shoot-and-scoot” cycle achievable in roughly 90 seconds, reducing vulnerability to counter-battery fire.

For Cyprus, these features translate into substantial improvements in battlefield flexibility. The National Guard gains the capability to rapidly deliver concentrated and precise rocket fire at long range, supporting manoeuvre forces, suppressing enemy formations or infrastructure, and strengthening overall deterrence posture. The system’s automation also simplifies crew training and improves survivability. Beyond its technical characteristics, TAMNAVA reflects growing defence-industrial cooperation between Cyprus and Serbia. The acquisition highlights Serbia’s emergence as a competitive exporter in the international land-systems market, while providing Cyprus with cost-effective access to advanced artillery technologies at a time of rising regional security challenges.

The Ministry of Defence emphasized that the introduction of TAMNAVA represents an important step in the continued modernization of the National Guard. In addition to mobility and firepower, the system enhances precision, response time and interoperability across artillery units. Its induction upgrades the overall capabilities of the Artillery Branch, improving readiness for both national-defence and multinational operational frameworks.

With the acceptance trials now successfully completed, the system is expected to become fully operational in the near term. Training programs, tactical integration and doctrinal alignment are already under way to ensure seamless incorporation into Cyprus’ defensive architecture. The deployment of TAMNAVA marks one of the most significant upgrades to Cyprus’ artillery forces in recent years and underscores the government’s commitment to ensuring credible and modern deterrent capabilities within a rapidly evolving regional security environment.

