**Legal consequences (criminal and/or civil) for foreign citizens purchasing Greek Cypriot owned property in the area of Cyprus occupied by Turkey**

• Foreign citizens are cautioned against purchasing property owned by Greek Cypriots in the part of the Republic of Cyprus under Turkish belligerent occupation since 1974.

• In 1974 Turkish armed forces expelled and continue to prevent more than 170,000 displaced persons from returning to their homes and to peacefully enjoy their properties. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), call upon all states to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus and not to recognize any other state in Cyprus or assist the secessionist entity in any way. As such, the illegal secessionist entity in the occupied area of Cyprus does not have jurisdiction to perform valid transfers of property ownership.

• Moreover, under the laws of the Republic of Cyprus, the use of property registered in the name of another individual, constitutes a criminal offence. The commission of this offence could lead to the issuance of a European arrest warrant, enforceable in any of the 26 EU countries, as well as an international arrest warrant.

• Article 303A of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Cyprus, as amended by Law 130(I)/2006, deals with fraudulent transactions involving another person's immovable property. Subsection (1) states that anyone who intentionally engages in such transactions with the aim of committing fraud is committing a felony, punishable by up to seven years in prison. An attempt to commit this offence is also a felony and carries a potential prison sentence of five years.

• This provision applies when a person: (a) sells, rents, conveys, or allows the use of the property to someone else, (b) advertises or promotes the property's sale, rental, mortgage, or use by another person, (c) enters into an agreement related to the property's sale, rental, mortgage, or use by another person, or (d) accepts the sale, rental, mortgage, or use of the mentioned real property.

• Moreover, the scope of application of the Criminal Code was expanded in 2006 to encompass offenses committed abroad by any person, as long as the offence is connected to immovable property located within the Republic. This includes actions like conspiracy, attempted crimes, incitement, or any actions that encourage others to commit offences linked to immovable property within the Republic. It is reminded that the legislation of the Republic of Cyprus applies to the entirety of the country’s territory, including the areas under belligerent occupation by Turkey.

• In addition, Greek Cypriot property owners may also bring civil action against usurpers of their property before the competent civil Courts of the Republic of Cyprus. The EU Court of Justice in the case of Meletis Apostolides v. David and Linda Orams declared the obligation of national courts of all EU Member States to enforce and execute such Republic of Cyprus’ Court judgments. As a result, an illegal purchase of property in the areas occupied by Turkey, could result in civil action before the Court of the Republic of Cyprus. Such rulings are enforceable against the property of the usurper at any EU Member State.

• Finally, be cautioned that the Republic of Cyprus is fully intended to initiate criminal proceedings against usurpers.