Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2012

The Honorable Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Cyprus
Presidential Palace Avenue
1447, Nicosia
Cyprus

Dear Dr. Kozakou-Marcoullis:

We are writing to urge you to revisit the disappointing European Union Council decision not to designate Hezbollah as a terrorist entity despite increasing reports indicating Hezbollah is operating in Europe to finance, plan, recruit, and execute terrorist plots.

Hezbollah has a long and deadly history of carrying out terrorist attacks against European citizens, soldiers and diplomats and targeting Americans and Israelis living, working and travelling in Europe. In the last year alone, Hezbollah and its partners in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) Quds Force, have been implicated or are suspected to be behind attempted and successful terror plots in the United States, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Azerbaijan, India, Georgia, Kenya, Cyprus and Bulgaria.

While you have stated that the Council would revisit the issue with "tangible evidence" of Hezbollah's involvement in terrorist activities, we would submit there is a deep body of evidence and intelligence underlying decisions by the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands to classify in its entirety Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and action by the United Kingdom and Australia to place the "Hezbollah External Security Organization" on their terrorist lists.

Moreover, there is precedent in the European Union for action to isolate Hezbollah over its support for terror and incitement. In May 2002, the European Union froze the assets of seven Hezbollah leaders in its financial sanctions list for terrorism. In March 2005, the European Parliament adopted a resolution recognizing that "clear evidence exists of terrorist activities on the part of Hezbollah," and called on the European Union Council to take "all necessary steps to curtail them." And, France, Spain and Germany have taken measures to restrict Hezbollah's al-Manar media station. The recent Hezbollah plots on EU soil must be met with a response.

Indeed, Cypriot authorities are currently prosecuting an identified Hezbollah operative arrested for an attempted terror attack against Israeli tourists to the island that had strong similarities to the deadly attack executed against Israelis in Bulgaria just two weeks later. Cyprus has long shown leadership in standing up to terrorism, and it would be particularly meaningful for Cyprus -

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Cyprus has long shown leadership in standing up to terrorism, and it would be particularly meaningful for Cyprus - itself a target of Hezbollah's plotting - to take the initiative on this issue in its term as President of the Council of the European Union.

We hope you will act to build the consensus within the European Union Council that is urgently needed to weaken Hezbollah's terrorist infrastructure - an issue that directly affects us all. We look forward to working with you and your counterparts to increase engagement between the United States and the European Union to prevent and deter future Hezbollah-sponsored terrorist operations.

Sincerely,

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Member of Congress

Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Steve Israel
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