



**REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

**REVIEW ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA IN CYPRUS**



***Nicosia, 2017***

**ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of Cyprus' national voluntary review on implementation of Agenda2030 offers an overview of progress so far, in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Cyprus. It outlines the main priorities and planning in a process of incorporation of the SDGs in national policies and the activities of government and non-government sectors towards this direction, as well as Cyprus' international activity towards promotion of priority SDGs. It also describes the efforts towards generating institutional and civil society ownership of the effort to implement Agenda 2030.

The review presents the results of a preliminary analysis and mapping exercise on Cyprus' current progress, identifies challenges and outlines next steps. It describes the institutional framework set up to work on this mapping and illustrates the present situation for each of the SDGs, highlighting progress already made, related government or EU policies and challenges faced. A statistical annex is also included.

The compilation of the review was coordinated by the Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is to be presented to the Council of Ministers for information and formal approval.

### **Institutional mechanism**

Cyprus' institutional mechanism for the implementation of Agenda 2030 is comprised mainly of Ministries and other governmental services, such as the Statistical Service, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A relevant line Ministry has been assigned as coordinator for each one of the 17 Goals. A mapping exercise was initiated at the end of 2016, aiming to define stakeholders, national or EU strategies and indicators, if applicable, for each of the targets. Meanwhile, the Cypriot Statistical Service gathered all indicators available. Priorities were set based on the government priorities as well as on horizontal focal areas, such as youth.

Upon the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a process has been launched for indicating the most appropriate coordinator for SDGs implementation at domestic policy level. Due to institutional transformations occurring in the past year, under the restructuring of the public service and the possible creation of State Ministries -still under discussion in the House of Representatives- the coordination of both the domestic and the foreign policy aspects of the SDGs, as well as communicating and coordinating with the civil society, remained under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation, where relevant, with line Ministries.

### **Integration of sustainable development issues and the three dimensions in the national framework: The Republic of Cyprus' sustainable development policy**

Cyprus faced a deep, unprecedented economic crisis that reached its peak in 2013. It was, therefore, essential to focus on short-run difficulties of the various affected groups and measures to address them, which led to an inevitable focus on the economic and social dimensions of policies. Legislation or other policies already exist for most SDGs and targets, through national and European strategies. Moreover, the structural and institutional reforms promoted, especially in the public sector, the health system and other sectors, aspire to lead breakthrough systemic transformations, aiming at creating employment and enhanced governance, transparency, competitiveness, as well as more efficient service provision to citizens, including with the further development of e-government.

The mapping exercise indicated the absence of a horizontal strategy covering all three dimensions of sustainable development. In its place, strategic programming, albeit short to medium-term one, and other actions, cover most, if not all, of the SDGs. The review outlines the Republic of Cyprus' priorities (mainly SDGs 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, as well as SDGs 4 and 14) and the policies involved in achieving them. Cyprus' international activity in promoting SDG implementation is also described.

### **Enabling environment**

Following an extensive promotion, during 2015, of the various dimensions of sustainable development to the Cypriot public, an effort undertaken in the framework of the European Year for Development by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Cypriot NGOs, the Cypriot civil society carried out numerous projects, promoting all or specific SDGs. Engagement with the private sector is mainly undertaken by the Directorate General for European Programs, Coordination and Development, in the context of promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility and in cooperation with many other stakeholders. The House of Representatives' Committee for the Environment has initiated parliamentary discussions on Agenda 2030, by requesting an informative session with the SDGs Coordinator (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on Cyprus' progress in SDGs achievement. More activity is expected to follow in all areas of cooperation, including towards engagement of the local authorities in the process of Agenda 2030 implementation.

### **Status of implementation of the SDGs in Cyprus: progress and challenges**

Progress is observed in all the SDGs, while planning is already in place for most of them, especially the priority ones, through all the line policies. The Republic of Cyprus takes pride in its success in achieving a number of targets at a 100% level, many of them in the framework of SDG 3. Best practices include the provision of free and easily accessible education to everyone at all education levels, without discrimination, addressing the challenge of Cyprus' limited water resources and supplying excellent quality of drinking water to consumers, as well as the efforts made towards combating human trafficking, by effectively enforcing new legislation and expanding the role and competences of the Police Anti-Trafficking Bureau. On the international sphere, Cyprus actively promotes international cooperation on issues such as the protection of cultural property and regional cooperation for the protection from marine pollution. Concerning progress foreseen, there has been an upward trend in the use of renewable sources of energy, while steps are being taken towards a more sustainable tourism product.

Being at the initial stages of implementation of Agenda 2030, it is obvious that there is more work to be done to fully achieve the SDGs. Main challenges for Cyprus include, among others, addressing a high public debt and a relatively high unemployment rate after the economic crisis, the low contribution of the agricultural sector in the GDP, energy dependency on imported sources, under-representation of women in political and public life, the need for a sustainable consumption policy, a high percentage of non-attainment in mathematics, science and reading and the need to increase Official Development Assistance to reach the desired level.

### **Next steps**

The process for Cyprus has been initiated with the mapping exercise and the preparation of the current review. Next steps include the assignment of a coordinator for the implementation of Agenda 2030 at domestic level, with the competency to overview future strategies and effectively incorporate the SDGs. Remaining indicators will be selected in collaboration with the Statistical Service, and benchmarks and targets will be set by the competent authorities. In the meantime, Cyprus will continue to participate in defining and implementing the future EU 2030 agenda as well as in relevant international events.

In the framework of reinforcing activity and cooperation between all stakeholders and as follow up to the online survey organized by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education and Culture on SDGs priorities, an extensive public information campaign will commence. More involvement of the House of Representatives is also expected in 2017. Engagement of local authorities is also considered a necessary step towards creating ownership and involvement of the totality of the Cypriot society.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ways in which the global, common goal, called sustainable development, is achieved and the necessary tools for its accomplishment differ from country to country. Nevertheless, the essential elements that comprise development are common for everyone. These include education, health, gender equality, empowerment of women, girls and young people, support for entrepreneurship, especially SMEs, environmental protection and human rights, as well as rule of law with institutions capable of combating corruption and ensuring peaceful and secure societies.

The ambitious vision of sustainability adopted by global leaders on 25-26 September 2015, titled “Transforming the World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, records the elements that comprise sustainable development. Cyprus was actively involved in the two year process of developing the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Through its engagement in the intergovernmental process, it has contributed in this extraordinary achievement and continues to promote SDGs in the international sphere.

In an interdependent and globalized world, Agenda 2030 is, naturally and by inception, universal, and should be implemented by all countries, both rich and poor, based on solidarity, mutual accountability and shared responsibility, so that no one is left behind. Cyprus supports and is committed to the new Global Partnership, addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals should be incorporated into government programs of all countries of the world.

The process of drafting the Voluntary National Review for the UN High Level Political Forum in 2017 has offered Cyprus’ small-sized administration an opportunity to commence the mapping of all the activities and strategies that can be linked with the SDGs and the three dimensions, thus a great chance for reinforcing the path towards their achievement. The EU dimension has been a contributor in that endeavor, having effectuated a comprehensive mapping. Cyprus considers this review a very useful tool and urges UN partners to engage in this procedure. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently coordinating this process and, in cooperation with other government departments, is trying to raise public awareness and participation to the largest possible extent.

*Due to the continued illegal occupation of 36.2% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkish military forces since 1974, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control over all of its national territory. Consequently, all information and data included in the present Voluntary National Review concern the Government-controlled areas.*

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS FOR PREPARATION OF THE REVIEW

The compilation of the present review was based on the common reporting guidelines for Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF as presented in the annex of the Secretary-General's report on critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. Most of the chapters included in the recommended structure have been covered, some were merged, and some divided into separate chapters. For example, conclusions and next steps have been consolidated into a single chapter. The integration of Agenda 2030 in domestic and international policy is incorporated in one chapter, while the creation of an enabling environment comprises a different chapter.

A separate study was conducted by NGO CARDET on the participation of the Cypriot civil society on SDGs implementation. It enumerates specific actions taken towards this objective, whether those were informative, before and/or after the adoption of Agenda 2030, or focused on specific SDGs. The study is summarized in Chapter 5, while its totality is included as Annex 2. Given the importance of the private sector in SDG implementation, a report on Government engagement with enterprises regarding Corporate Social Responsibility is also integrated in the same chapter. An extensive chapter on the progress towards the achievement of each SDG forms the core of the review. The main measures and actions taken as well as means of implementation, if applicable, are presented in the aforesaid analysis of each SDG. A statistical annex is included.

The purpose of the exercise is to map Cyprus' present compliance with the SDGs and targets, identify the progress and challenges and suggest actions to be taken in the future. It firstly provides an overview of the institutional framework –mainly at technocratic level- that was set up to work on this mapping as well as the institutional challenges. That is followed by an overview of the current situation for each of the SDGs, highlighting completion of goals/targets and other progress already made, related government or EU policies –where applicable- and challenges faced. The review also offers a highlight of all government policy priorities that cover the three dimensions of development and provide the substantive framework for SDG implementation in Cyprus, as well as the country's activity at UN level on promoting Agenda 2030 implementation.

The statistical Annex includes a preliminary selection of statistical indicators that can be used to depict the current position of Cyprus relevant to each of the seventeen sustainable development goals. The selection was done by the Statistical Service of Cyprus and largely draws on the EU SDG indicator set. It therefore looks primarily at EU policies contributing to the fulfillment of the SDGs, rather than directly at the goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on which the UN indicators for global monitoring focus. This approach had the advantage that the data were readily available and no significant new data collections needed to be introduced or methodologically developed. As a consequence, the exercise did not entail any significant additional burden on the statistical system and had no substantial financial implications. The compilation of the review was coordinated by the Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is to be presented to the Council of Ministers for information and formal approval.

### 3. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM

Cyprus' institutional mechanism for the implementation of Agenda 2030 is comprised mainly of Ministries and other governmental services, such as the Statistical Service, and falls under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following an extensive, introductory meeting organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2016, an inter-ministerial group was established, comprised of contact points mostly from the strategic planning units of each Ministry. As a first step, each one of the 17 Goals was assigned to the most relevant Ministry, which, in turn, assumed the responsibility of defining and liaising with all stakeholders.

Prompted by Cyprus' commitment to present a Voluntary National Review (VNR), the Ministries then were requested to map each Goal and targets, defining -if applicable- relevant stakeholders, national or EU strategies and indicators. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs undertook the task of compiling all the information into a single document. This extensive mapping exercise aimed at engaging the public service to present an outline of Cyprus' overall progress and policies. Evidently, its results constitute the basis on which the core of the VNR was drafted. Meanwhile, the Cypriot Statistical Service gathered all indicators available.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also assumed the responsibility of attempting to define a national coordinator for the implementation of the SDGs, taking into consideration the line Ministries' views. Most Ministries supported the assignment of the coordination of the Agenda 2030 implementation at domestic level and the forming of a National Strategy to an institutional structure under the Presidency of the Republic, which would have a horizontal view of all actions towards the achievement of the SDGs. Due to institutional transformations underway, in the framework of the restructuring of the public service and the possible creation of State Ministries, which are still being discussed in the House of Representatives, the coordination of both the domestic and the external aspect of Agenda 2030 still remains under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, given its wider knowledge of the issue at hand.

Communication and coordination with the civil society was done at various levels and by various government sectors. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as coordinating body, participated in numerous actions organized by Cypriot NGOs as well as seminars and other activities relevant to Agenda 2030 organized by line Ministries. It also made a presentation on the SDGs and Cyprus' progress to the Parliament's Environment Committee upon a request by its President. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture, it circulated an online survey on the SDGs and the priorities the government should have, in the framework of the government's public consultation initiative. The survey is still ongoing.

In conclusion, a procedure has been initiated through an inter-ministerial contact group and steps are being made in the right direction. Cyprus' engagement and willingness to present a VNR report in 2017 is indicative of a very positive driving force. The greatest challenge faced at the moment, due to institutional restructuring, is the absence of a specific, horizontal coordination body that, in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry would continue to coordinate the external agenda-, will create the corresponding structures and coordinate the domestic implementation of Agenda 2030 with all relevant stakeholders, in order to engage the Cypriot society in its entirety in the process. Progress is expected in the near future.

## 4. INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES: THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

### 4.1. Domestic aspect

The economic crisis that struck in 2008 and the adversity faced by the Cypriot economy in 2013 have had major impacts in the country on the planning and progress towards sustainable development. Growth rates fell and unemployment rose dramatically, while poverty deepened. Facing this deep, unprecedented crisis, as well as short-run difficulties of the various affected groups and the need for measures to address them, the political leadership focused on the economic and social dimensions of policies. At the same time, legislation or other policies already exist for most SDGs and targets, though national and European strategies. In parallel, the active labor market policies and the structural and institutional reforms promoted, especially in the public sector, the health system and other sectors, aspire to lead to breakthrough systemic transformations, aiming at creating employment and enhanced governance, transparency, competitiveness, as well as more efficient service provision to citizens, including with the further development of e-government.

The government's main priority has been the regaining of trust in the Cypriot economy through its stabilization and reactivation. As mentioned above, the collective effort concentrated on the stabilization of the financial system, the correction of troubled public finances and the implementation of structural reforms in order to lay the foundations for recovery and creation of new jobs, in conditions of social cohesion. The results of the already advanced reforms are becoming apparent, with the Cypriot economy returning to financial stability, achieving fiscal consolidation and depicting high growth rates in 2015 and 2016 with very positive prospects for the coming years. The implementation of significant structural reforms and the simultaneous maintenance and enhancement of their dynamic is considered indispensable, if the improvement of competitiveness and productivity of the economy is to be enhanced further.

As a result of the institutions' focus on short and medium term measures for tackling the economic crisis, no longer term sustainable development strategy has been formulated at present. Instead, a combination of policies and legislation, both national and EU, cover most part of the SDGs in Cyprus at all three dimensions, on the basis of which progress is being achieved at a significant degree and more improvement is expected. The most important horizontal planning is reflected in the **Action Plan for Growth** and the **National Reform Programme prepared in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy** while complementary priorities, aligned with all three dimensions of sustainable development, are analyzed below.

The primary political axes of government planning aiming to support economic development and employment on a stable basis are the following: Investment for Growth and Entrepreneurship; Administrative Reform and Modernization of Institutions and the State; Completion and full implementation of a modern welfare state; Fighting Unemployment; Modernization of the education and of the health system.

At the same time, through the **National Reform Programme**, key horizontal and sector-specific policy actions are being promoted aiming to address key economic challenges in order to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Emphasis is placed inter alia on enhancing good governance and administration at a public service and business administration level as well as introducing and/or enforcing transparency mechanisms at all levels of public decision making and policy formulation, as well as on efficiency and competitiveness enhancing initiatives such as Better Regulation, enhancement of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, monitoring competitiveness etc. Within the framework of the National Strategy Against Corruption, which is under preparation, legislative modernization and a series of targeted actions to prevent and suppress corruption in the public and private sectors will be promoted.

Concerning the social dimension and due to an increase of needs for social support stemming from the economic environment, the **reform of the social welfare policy** has been an immediate priority. The new policy is based on the principle that the state must be able to ensure a minimum standard of living for all citizens, while taking steps to activate, integrate or reintegrate all those in need into the labor market. The reform of the social welfare policy, initiated by the



introduction of the minimum guaranteed income and the creation of a single social welfare record, continues with the linkage of benefits with active employment policies and strong actions for market entry or reintegration and provision of social services. Towards this goal, **the National Strategy on Social Policy was adopted for the period 2014-2020**, providing a comprehensive approach to the challenges faced. The Strategy addresses the promotion of children's welfare, the reform of the welfare system, active inclusion, long-term care and effective governance.

Furthermore, innovative measures and policies are introduced to support growth, production and the provision of services, including thorough improvements in efficiencies, the reduction of waste and pollution, and the safeguarding of our natural capital and ecosystem services. Specific attention and support is promoted for certain priority areas:

- Formulation and implementation of **an integrated strategy in the tourism sector**, extension of the **maritime sector** and infrastructure and modernization of the **professional services sector**, which relate primarily with SDGs 8 and 9, but also with SDGs 12 and 14.
- Strengthening the competitiveness of the primary and secondary agricultural sector in Cyprus and reviving the Cypriot countryside. The **Rural Development Plan 2014-2020**, linked with SDG 2, is the basic strategic tool through which agriculture's multifunctional objectives will be supported for the modernization and the improvement of competitiveness of the agricultural sector. Targets include increase of organic farming; increase of the agriculture sector and revival of the rural population by encouraging farmers –especially young farmers– to move to the countryside; sustainable productivity of the agriculture sector as well as reducing pollution from production.
- Promotion of **green development** and creation of green jobs. Investing in waste management, greenhouse gas reduction, recycling and adaptation to climate change: The **National Action Plan for a Green Economy** is one of the key tools towards resource efficiency, sustainable consumption and production patterns and more sustainable growth. The Plan, which aims to exploit and enhance synergies between the environmental and other economic sectors, can be related with SDGs 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 and includes measures in all key sectors, such as agriculture, water resources, biodiversity and green infrastructure, forests, energy, transport, industry, waste management, tourism, climate change and adaptation.
- Development of an integrated and holistic national **industrial policy** with an aim to enhance the participation of the industrial sector in the GDP. Enhancement of digital and industrial abilities, embodiment of primary technology, **investments in Research and Development** with the purpose to develop innovative products and services, offering high added value and increase productivity and exports: Especially linked with the implementation of SDG 9 (infrastructure, industrialization and innovation), but also with SDGs 7, 8 and 12, **the new integrated industrial strategy will take into account policies such as the Smart Specialization Strategy, the Action Plan of the National Coalition for Digital Jobs, the National Digital Strategy, the National Policy Statement for the Enhancement of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Cyprus** and other initiatives taken at national and EU level.

A **focus on youth** has been set as a general priority in the implementation of the SDGs, therefore SDG4 and its achievement is fundamental for Cyprus. **The National Youth Strategy (NYS) of Cyprus for the period 2017-2022** defines, for the first time, the vision of the state for its young people. It is the government's commitment to implement actions that guarantee quality of life and offer new opportunities for all the young people in Cyprus. It aspires to ensure the active participation of all young people in society and to explore ways that empower them to realize their full potential as citizens.

In order to do so, the NYS establishes an integrated, cross-sectoral mechanism for designing, implementing and monitoring all policy areas that are inter-related and directly affect young people, as well as a participatory approach, with the involvement of youth in policy formulation. Thus, it ensures that there is a medium and long-term plan for improving the situation of young people, with a set of defined objectives and corresponding measures under eight main fields of action. These fields of action which derive from the European Youth Strategy, are: Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Health and Wellbeing, Participation, Volunteerism, Social Inclusion, Youth and the World, Creativity and Culture.

The above analysis leads to the conclusion that a large part of Agenda 2030 is being accomplished through already implemented government and EU policies. In view of the abovementioned government priority areas and taking into consideration other special issues and horizontal interests relating, for example, to youth, gender issues and the island nature of Cyprus, a consultation between all government departments, coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has identified certain SDGs priorities:

1. SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere (Coordinator: Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Insurance).
2. SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Coordinator: Ministry of Education and Culture)
3. SDG 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (Coordinator: Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism)
4. SDG 9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (Coordinator: Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism).
5. SDG 14 - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (Coordinator: Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment).

The economic crisis has caused a considerable setback to Cyprus' path towards sustainable development, obligatorily focusing the government's attention to crisis management and shorter term –mainly until 2020- planning. At the same time, it has offered an opportunity to make structural changes which will improve the economy's efficiency, resilience and investment and growth potential. The main challenge is the absence of a longer term sustainable development strategy that includes all the three dimensions of development, which is directly linked to structural changes still on course. In the meantime, relevant planning cycles in all governance sectors in combination with various EU policy objectives implemented in Cyprus, are aligned with SDG implementation, while many goals/targets are already achieved. The present VNR exercise has been especially useful in that it offers an overview of all strategies in the various sectors, which will aid in the formulation of a unified policy for fully achieving the remaining targets.

## **4.2. International aspect**

Due to the current economic constraints, Cyprus' development cooperation policy is maintained at the same level since 2013, while the undertaking of new projects and technical assistance has been mainly frozen. Nevertheless, Cyprus continues to fulfill its contractual obligations concerning the European Development Policy, as well as towards international organizations such as WFP, FAO, UNIDO, UNDP, UNHCR etc. Small steps are being made towards reactivation of bilateral development programs, such as the formulation of a scholarship programme, while full blown development cooperation planning will be hopefully reactivated in the near future. In 2015, the Cypriot ODA contribution amounted to 0,09% GNP.

On the humanitarian side, Cyprus spurs no effort in seeking creative ways to contribute, despite its limited resources. At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, Cyprus expressed its support to the Secretary General's "Agenda for Humanity", and made transformative commitments, taking into consideration its own capacities and capabilities. Among those commitments is the designing, within 2017, of a National Humanitarian Policy Plan, which will ensure that organizational structures and internal processes foster coherence between humanitarian and development activities. Additionally, it will give the mandate for a 5-year strategic planning of Cyprus' humanitarian assistance, which will include financing to un-earmarked funding and supporting hosts in coping with large refugee caseloads, with a provision for gender and education in forced displacement situations, and will invest in programs that link climate change with disaster risk reduction efforts.

Although economic contributions have been reduced, Cyprus continues to be active in multilateral fora, such as the EU and the UN, in supporting the needs of the worlds' poorer, with an increased focus on Least Developed Countries, Africa and countries coming out of conflict. Similarly, Cyprus supports small island developing states (SIDS) that need enhanced support to meet the challenge of climate change to which they are most vulnerable.

Cyprus also follows closely the Agenda 2030 developments at the UN, contributing to these by submitting inputs on the basis of national experience and positions and by actively participating in relevant processes and discussions. While recognizing the indivisibility of Agenda 2030, Cyprus currently focuses at the level of the United Nations in New York on a number of areas related to the goals of the Agenda, which are also national priorities. These are the sustainable use of the oceans; gender equality and the empowerment of women; fighting climate change; protecting cultural heritage and migration. Specifically:

- During the Agenda 2030 negotiations, Cyprus was especially active on Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. It has strongly supported the Oceans Conference (New York, 5-9 June 2017) and its national commitments include regional cooperation initiatives for preparedness and response to major hydrocarbon marine pollution incidents. At the heart of all of Cyprus' international positions on the oceans and the law of the sea stands its steadfast support of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea-UNCLOS (1982), which sets out the legal framework, within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.
- The protection of cultural heritage is also a policy area that is dear to Cyprus and is related both to target 11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage but also to Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The protection of cultural heritage has been one of the priorities of the Chairmanship of Cyprus of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (November 2016-May 2017). Cyprus strongly supported the development of the new Convention of the Council of Europe, on Offences relating to Cultural Property, which aims at protecting cultural property and preventing and combating cultural property crimes. The Convention was opened for signature at the 127th Session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Nicosia, on 19 May 2017. A number of events and activities were also organized internationally around the same theme, including a special event on "Promoting and strengthening the international legal framework for the protection of cultural heritage -the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention and other relevant legal Instruments and initiatives" (New York, 28 February 2017) co-organized by the missions of Cyprus and Italy in New York and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT). In addition, Cyprus will actively participate in the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.
- Cyprus has been a strong supporter of Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" and the Paris Agreement, with high commitment and active involvement in relevant UN processes. In May 2017, the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the UN co-chaired together with the Permanent Representative of Peru to the UN the 18th UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, with the timely theme "The effects of climate change on oceans".
- Cyprus is an active and strong advocate for gender equality and the empowerment of women (Goal 5). It was a member of the EU negotiating team for the Agreed Conclusions of the 60th Commission on the Status of Women, which dealt with the theme of "Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development", directly linked to Agenda 2030. Furthermore, Cyprus has co-organized side-events, with other partners and international organizations, in the sidelines of CSW60 and CSW61 and is a keen supporter of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Last but not least, Cyprus has been an advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights, recognizing how important these rights are for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- The strategic location of Cyprus and its historical experience as a country of origin, transit and destination of migrants has provided it with a deep knowledge of migration and of the importance of developing a common understanding on the phenomenon at the international level. As such, Cyprus supports the ongoing preparatory process on developing a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, as well as relevant processes in the Council of Europe, especially in the education sector. Cyprus is prepared to share its expertise and

play a leading role in the Mediterranean region for the establishment of synergies and partnerships that will aim in helping Refugees and Migrants to adjust to the new culture and environment as well as to make good use of their qualifications.

- Finally, Cyprus participates actively during the main session of the 2nd Committee of the UN GA. Cyprus supports a 2nd Committee that is effective, efficient and aligned as much as possible to the Agenda 2030. It also pays particular emphasis in promoting understanding, dialogue and compromise between the UN member states within the 2nd Committee. Cyprus has negotiated on behalf of the European Union the resolution titled “Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/RES/71/241) during the 71st UNGA 2nd Committee session. For the upcoming 2nd Committee session of the 72nd UN GA, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Cyprus will hold the position of the Vice-Chair of the bureau of the Committee.

## 5. CREATING OWNERSHIP OF THE SDGs: SYNERGIES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

### Cooperation between government and Civil Society Organizations

The close cooperation between government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has deepened with the occasion of the participation of Cyprus in the promotion of the European Year for Development 2015 (EYD2015). The MFA, as coordinator of the relevant national programme, established collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) and CYINDEP, the development NGO platform. Together they shaped and implemented activities, aiming at creating citizens' awareness for global issues with a special emphasis on youth, while promoting EU development policy. Events took place during the entirety of 2015, in all cities and included lectures, films, art exhibitions, youth competitions etc.

In 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the process of evaluation of Agenda 2030 in Cyprus, in order to identify points where Cyprus needed to focus its short, medium and long-term planning for achievement of the SDGs. Up to this day, the MFA supports inclusive decision making in formulating new initiatives and interventions to raise awareness on the SDGs. A good example is an online survey on SDGs progress and priorities at national level, which was launched by the MFA and MOEC, but was drafted and distributed in collaboration with CSOs.

The Cypriot CSOs, due to their developed expertise and network capacities, have had an active role in drafting, communicating and implementing a host of awareness and –mainly- education activities related either directly or indirectly to the SDGs. Their collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture has been notable, especially in preparing and implementing the Ministry's strategic paper on Global Education.

### Civil society activity

CSOs in Cyprus, especially after the country's EU accession, which resulted to the possibility of their participation in EU funded programs, have been very active and cover a great variety of issues and sectors, from protection of human and community rights, recycling, support to vulnerable populations, to peace education, global citizenship education and innovative learning techniques.

Despite their very active role within society, Cypriot CSOs have not undertaken many initiatives that directly raise awareness towards the Sustainable Development Goals, one of the reasons being that most CSOs have not yet developed sufficient capacity and understanding to link their activities with SDGs. Having said that, and as the relevant report on CSO activity (Annex 2) indicates, numerous projects have been implemented in direct relation to the SDGs, while during the second semester of 2017, local CSOs have been awarded with projects specifically targeting the promotion of awareness raising on the SDGs.

A respectable number of relevant projects produce educational resources mainly focused on soft skills and capacity building. Awareness and advocacy projects are also implemented, focusing on global citizenship concepts and innovative educational methods, addressed to multipliers, including but not limited to CSO trainers, government officers and the general public. Another set of projects that are beginning to become more prevalent lately are awareness and advocacy campaigns.

Apart from the projects that relate to training of government and other officers, the main target group of the CSO projects related to Agenda 2030 is the Cypriot youth. This aligns with the general priority of focus on youth set for the national implementation of the SDGs, and the National Youth Strategy (NYS) of Cyprus for the period 2017-2022. In general, CSOs in Cyprus have a strong focus on education, as it has always been considered as the primary field where change and progress can occur, and are developing their capacity to be further involved in issues such as overseas aid, development infrastructure, sustainable energy, environment and wellbeing and health.

### Parliament participation



The first introduction of Agenda 2030 to the Cypriot Parliament was on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the EYD. The event, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, took place in the House of Representatives, at the beginning of 2016. The MFA's Permanent Secretary took the opportunity to inform the Parliament's Foreign and European Affairs Committee on the global strive for sustainable development, reflected in the adoption of Agenda 2030. As follow up, in 2017, Agenda 2030 and the actions that Cyprus is taking towards its implementation were presented by the national coordinator to the Parliamentary Committee for the Environment. More engagement of the House of Representatives is expected in the course of 2017.

### **Engagement with the private sector**

Contributing to the achievement of the goals set under global sustainability is a key issue not only for governments and policy makers but for the society as a whole, including individuals, social groups, academia, organizations and businesses. It is evidenced that businesses' activities and operations are part of the root that causes social and environmental crises worldwide. However, at the same time, it should be recognized that business is a potential key source for solutions that can effectively address numerous sustainability issues. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the key tool through which businesses can become more responsible towards society, the environment and, generally, the ecosystem within which they operate. Hence, there is an obligation for enterprises to contribute to global sustainability, addressing their responsibility for their impact in society.

The concept of CSR has evolved through the years, moving from corporate philanthropy and charities towards the integration of sustainability into business strategies. In practical terms, that means that businesses try to identify and address societal, environmental, ethical and other challenges within their field of operation. Whether this is driven by clear responsibility causes or by value-creating potential is of less importance, compared to the outcome of the private sector's engagement into CSR activities. CSR performance differs amongst businesses depending on their size, sector as well as the market they operate in. The wider culture, the educational system as well as the regulatory framework also contribute to businesses' responsible behavior within a country. Therefore, a possible need might arise for policy intervention to enhance and promote CSR, hence promote businesses' contribution in achieving SDGs. This is the case when it comes to small markets, such as the Cypriot market, where the majority of local enterprises are micro units which, in the past few years, have been strongly affected by the recent economic crisis.

As of 2012, the Cyprus government has reinforced efforts to promote the private sector's responsibility and sustainability, mainly through awareness actions falling under the National Action Plan for Corporate Social Responsibility, but also through the development of various tools and initiatives that help companies improve their environmental performance (e.g. EMAS, EU Ecolabel), their energy efficiency (e.g. grant schemes for the use of RES), the implementation of human rights due diligence in line with the UN Guiding Principles (e.g. certifications of good business practices against gender discrimination, competitions for good practices as regards safety and health at work, codes of good practice regarding disability discrimination in employment and occupation, regarding the prevention of sexual harassment and harassment in employment and regarding the combat of racism). All these tools can directly or indirectly contribute to the achievement of most of the 17 SDGs, hence their continuous improvement and the promotion of their use by the Cypriot businesses is of high importance to the competent public authorities. Beyond promoting CSR, the implementation of these tools helps strengthening the effectiveness of the individual policies served by these tools as well as enhancing their contribution to the objectives of sustainable development. Moving towards a more integrated approach to enhance businesses' social responsibility, the government aims to further promote awareness and implementation of ISO26000, which has been recognized to contribute to most of the SDGs but mainly to the target set under SDGs 8, 12, 14 και 15.

Last but not least, the endorsement of EU Directive 2014/95/EU, as regards disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups, into the national law of Cyprus, can be clearly identified to contribute to the achievement of SDG 12.6 for encouraging companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle. The national law requires from large entities of public interest to prepare, submit and disclose on an annual basis,

from 2018 onwards, sustainability reports indicating the impact of their activities on environmental, social and employment issues as well as on issues related to respect for human rights, the fight against corruption etc.

Given the small size of the vast majority of the enterprises in Cyprus, it is estimated that no more than 20 undertakings will fall under the scope of the new law. However, the government aims to further promote CSR and sustainability reporting to the whole business community of Cyprus. An important initiative to this end is the CSR Conference “Reporting Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability” held the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 in Nicosia, Cyprus. The conference was organized by the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development (DG EPCD), as the competent public authority and national coordinator for the promotion of CSR in Cyprus, in cooperation with the business network CSR Cyprus and with the support of private sector associations. Businesses from all sectors attended the Conference as well as representatives of academia, public entities and other CSR competent bodies. A panel discussion held during the meeting was dedicated on potential business contribution to the 2030 SDGs.

## **Conclusion**

Due to the good cooperation with the competent government authorities (MOEC and MFA) and their recognition of the CSOs’ expertise and capacity to contribute, the CSOs in Cyprus have an active role in drafting, communicating and raising awareness concerning the SDGs among citizens. More needs to be done on linking most of CSO activities with the SDGs, therefore expanding activity to a greater number of NGOs and also varying the project focus from the general education aspect. Moreover, a more formalized collaboration between the Government and the CSOs so as to multiply impact, further enhance synergies and promote complementarity of actions would be very useful. As the SDGs awareness and action is still making its first steps, more parliament involvement is expected and reaching out to local authorities is a necessary step. Finally, CSR activity is well on its way and expected to increase, from the government side but also from the private sector.

## 6. GOALS AND TARGETS

### SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Cyprus is emerging from a deep economic crisis which has severely affected the welfare of its people. In 2009 Cyprus was hit by the world financial turmoil, the economic impact of which gradually spread over all sectors and areas of life. This led Cyprus to sign, in April 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Troika), in order to acquire financial assistance. Through the determined efforts of its people, Cyprus exited the Economic Adjustment Programme in March 2016 without a successor arrangement and accomplishing important achievements in the programme's duration. Economic policy in the past three years placed priority on fiscal consolidation, the resumption of financial stability and structural reforms to help businesses unleash the potential of the economy and return to growth, job creation and prosperity. Reforms have started to bear fruit. The economy reached a turning point in 2015, with growth having resumed and unemployment starting to decline.

Poverty figures for the period 2014-2015 reflect the negative effects of the financial crisis, with worsening of the labour market conditions and decrease in the income of the population. The at-risk-of poverty or social exclusion rate <sup>[1]</sup> (AROPE), in comparison to 2014, increased by 1.5pp (from 27.4% to 28.9%) in 2015. The analysis of the AROPE sub-indicators, demonstrates an increasing trend in the share of people living in very low work intensity (VLWI) households, reflecting the high levels of unemployment rate in Cyprus. In particular, the VLWI has increased by 1.2pp in 2015 (2015: 10.9%; 2014: 9.7%; 2011: 4.9%). The AROP (after social transfers), i.e. monetary poverty, increased from 14.4% in 2014 to 16.2% in 2015, while the SMD indicator remained at the same levels (15.3% in 2014; 15.4 in 2015). The number of working poor also witnessed an increase of 1.3pp from 2014 (2014: 7.8%; 2015: 9.1%). The AROPE for children (0-17) grew to 28.9% in 2015, while on the other hand the AROPE for the elderly (65+) decreased to 20.8% in 2015 from 27.2% in 2014. The mean equalized disposal income (in euro) of a household decreased from €18.418 in 2014 to €16.944 in 2015. Simultaneously, the poverty threshold (for 1 person household, in euro) decreased further reaching €8.276 in 2015, compared to €8.640 in 2014. Based on the available data it can be argued that the decrease in the income of the population of the country and the high unemployment rates are the main reasons behind the deterioration of the poverty figures in Cyprus.

#### Guaranteed Minimum Income

The Council of Ministers adopted in November 2014, the National Strategy on Social Policy for the period 2014-2020. The Strategy sets the main policy guidance for the period 2014-2020 providing a comprehensive approach to the challenges faced. The Strategy addresses the promotion of children's welfare, the reform of the welfare system, active inclusion, long-term care and effective governance. In combating conditions of poverty and social exclusion, Cyprus has undertaken a major reform of its welfare system. As welfare benefits were considered to be fragmented and in order to improve efficiency:

- A comprehensive social governance was decided through the creation of a single welfare benefit administration service under the MLWSI which was assigned the design and administration of all social benefits including those that in the past were under the responsibility of other Ministries, e.g. the child and lone parents benefits, the benefit provided to support low income pensioners, etc.
- A national registry of beneficiaries of social benefits was created, covering more than 250,000 social benefits recipients and indicating the level of support they receive.
- A comprehensive and reliable verification and control system was established that allows for the provision of targeted benefits to citizens who genuinely need the assistance.

At the heart of the reform was the introduction of the Guaranteed Minimum Income Scheme (GMI), which replaced the public assistance benefit. The GMI aims to provide assistance to individuals and families that cannot, despite their efforts, gain enough income to support their needs.

The GMI provides for basic needs based on a minimum consumption basket and covers also other needs, such as housing (rent or mortgage interest), municipality taxes and extraordinary needs, as well as child care needs and long-term care. The GMI is also provided to families which were not receiving any income support benefits in the past as it incorporates a new eligible group, the working poor, and consolidates low-income pensioners.

Furthermore, the GMI provides the framework for two mechanisms, social care and social intervention to GMI recipients. Social care provides for the subsidisation of the cost of home, institutional, respite and day care including child care of GMI recipients. Social Intervention refers to the activation and social inclusion of GMI recipients. This action includes a wide spectrum of services provided to a person or family unit receiving the GMI that will empower and support them in their social integration. The ultimate purpose of this action is the employment rehabilitation through co-operation with the Public Employment Services. Activation measures targeted at GMI beneficiaries, that involve training and development interventions as well as participation in public work programmes have been rolled out and are currently utilized for the social integration of GMI beneficiaries. The measure is related to the labour market, education and social challenges and to the employment national target.

The implementation of the GMI, including its fiscal impact, is monitored through the preparation of quarterly costing updates and beneficiary profile analysis. Preliminary simulations during its design phase concluded that the new system would have a small impact on the incidence of relative poverty (at-risk-of-poverty rate), a considerable positive impact on the intensity of relative poverty, and would significantly reduce absolute poverty. An assessment report on several aspects and dimensions of the GMI will be prepared as soon as the transfer of the public assistance beneficiaries is completed, in order to serve as a basis for designing improvements to the system as well as well-targeted activation programmes.

Further to the existing measures implemented in Cyprus addressing child poverty, the Government decided to devote the EU funding provided through the Fund of European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) on efforts to combat child deprivation and poverty. In particular, two actions are promoted: provision of breakfast at schools for deprived children and provision of basic material assistance to new-born babies of deprived families. The Government is focusing on the provision of accessible, affordable and quality social care programmes at local level (i.e. child care services, long-term social care services to the elderly and persons with disabilities, counselling services). Within the framework of the State Aid Scheme, NGOs and Local Authorities receive state aid based on certain criteria for the development and functioning of social care programmes. In 2016, 252 organizations received state aid for the operation of quality social care programmes, with a total budget of around 7 ml euros.

The Welfare Services of the Republic supervise the minimum quality standards of care structures according to the relevant legislations. Towards assuring the improvement of the quality of care services provided by the private sector (private for profit, NGOs and LAs), the Social Welfare Services are in the process of amending the existing legislative framework on minimum standards of care structures and are also drafting a new Law on home careers.



## **SDG 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**

Access to safe food in sufficient nutrition quality and quantity is fundamental for the daily life of every citizen. While in Cyprus hunger does not constitute a problem, due to the 2013 financial crisis, 2500 families were supported by various food banks in order to cover their daily needs. Though the number of the families in need has now decreased, such welfare efforts for the support of our most vulnerable citizens must continue.

The nutritional status of people living in Cyprus is generally good. However, nutritional disorders—primarily related to unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity—are a challenge, especially for children’s proper development. The Department of Agriculture is facing this challenge by being involved in the EU programme for fruits, vegetables, milk and milk products supply to a significant

percentage of school students according to the Regulations (EU) 1308/2013, 39/2017, 40/2017. The Department of Agriculture is also responsible for the withdrawal of citrus fruits and their free distribution to schools and approved charity institutions according to the Regulations (EU) 921/2016 and 376/2017.

Food safety is a fundamental strategy of the EU and specific attention is given to the legislative settlement and monitoring of all of the different scales of food production from the field until the final consumer. Specific improvements towards the target of quality production of agricultural products are expected through the **Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP)**, where, beyond other measures for market information and promotion, investments on certification of quality production systems locally or nationally, are encouraged. The contribution of the agricultural sector to the GDP in Cyprus results, with small fluctuations, to an average of 3% (mainly agricultural crops and livestock farming), a limited percentage due to the fast growth of other economy sectors in the recent past. Nevertheless, agricultural products (primary and secondary sectors) contribution to the total exports value, is approximately 37%.

Agriculture in Cyprus faces several additional challenges, compared to mainland countries. The basic problems arise from the fact that, Cyprus as a small and rather isolated Mediterranean island, is more vulnerable to climate change. Cyprus has a semi-arid climate and limited water resources which depend mainly on rainfall, which is unevenly distributed with considerable regional variations. Moreover, water resources are scarce and expensive to exploit and droughts occur frequently. Further problems which adversely affect the equitable and efficient management of agricultural investments in Cyprus are the small size of holdings and the agricultural land parcelling (5 parcels per holding on average, accounting for 75,1% of the farms have an average size of less than 2 ha per holding), as well as the low agricultural education level and the age-related structure of the agricultural sector (only 2,6% of the farm-leaders are less than 35 years old, while most Cypriot farmers are more than 55 years old).

Strengthening the competitiveness of the primary and secondary agricultural sectors and reviving the Cypriot countryside while protecting the environment form part of the national priority for rural development. The RDP 2014-2020, co-funded by the EU, is the basic strategic tool through which agriculture's multifunctional objectives are supported for the modernization and the improvement of competitiveness of the agricultural sector. The RDP 2014-2020 aims to encourage young people (under 40 years old) to get involved in the agricultural production, through the adoption of several financial measures for the first establishment, agricultural investments funding and agriculture oriented education, as well as innovation and transfer of knowledge. Specific attention is also given to family oriented agricultural enterprises, while special measures have also been adopted to encourage agriculture related investments on mountainous and arid areas, aiming to prevent land abandonment and degradation and to revive rural population.

Cyprus' specific goals and strategies for increasing sustainable food production through targeted agricultural investments and innovation are also included in the RDP 2014-2020. Specific efforts are implemented for the rise of the sheep/goat milk productivity and other agricultural products for local food consumption markets but also for export oriented purposes in order to facilitate the revival of Cyprus economy. Young farmers as leaders and entrepreneurs through the implementation of innovative agricultural production systems are encouraged to invest in the rise of the sustainable productivity of Cyprus agriculture sector. Organic farming and the transitional period during the transformation from conventional farming towards organic farming is also promoted through RDP 2014-2020 as an important tool towards sustainable and climate-smart agriculture. Organic farming in Cyprus occupied 3, 71% of the utilisable agricultural area in 2015 and its further development is targeted.

Moreover, in order to reduce pollution from production, where there is significant potential for improvement, 10 different agro-environment and agro-climatic measures are included in the RDP towards decrease of agrochemical inputs in the agricultural production; agricultural fields rotation; agricultural land use reclamation concerning the smart use of irrigation water reserves; conservation of natural landscapes, habitats, genetic resources and preservation of crop diversity. Such measures will also progressively improve the agricultural land and soil quality for sustainable agriculture. Regarding the contribution of agriculture in climate change, the



Department of Agriculture has submitted recently a specific study on the efficient use of energy in specific sectors of agriculture in Cyprus.

Cyprus has banned genetically modified organisms (GMOs) farming in its territory. Towards its commitment for the preservation of crop diversity and domesticated animals, the Agricultural Research Institute (ARI) runs a significant Gene Bank/Herbarium of more than 12000 named specimens of plant genetic resources. As national coordinator, ARI, cooperates with Biodiversity International mainly through the participation in the European Cooperative Programme FOR Plant Genetic Resources and other international and national organizations. ARI is also the National Focal Point in the European Internet Search Catalogue, the national correspondent for the FAO-World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources and the national representative to the Committee established by the EU Council Regulation 870/2004. ARI is also a partner in the “Trust project” for collecting, protecting and preparing crop wild relatives.

Moreover, ARI is involved in improvement, breeding, evaluation, conservation and management of plant genetic resources and domesticated animals. It maintains in protected environments several mother plant species for basic fruit tree propagation material and operates animal research farms. Also the DA maintains reference fruit tree fields and protected environment establishments in order to cover farmers’ needs in certified fruit tree propagation material.

In order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries and despite its small size, and limited resources, Cyprus has signed bilateral agreements with developing countries for mutual cooperation in several sectors including the agricultural production, agricultural research and plant and livestock gene banks. As a member of EU, Cyprus is firmly committed to the promotion of open and fair trade with all its trading partners. The EU has specific trade policies in place for all its partners and abides by the global rules on international trade set out by the WTO. All former export subsidies were lifted upon Cyprus’ accession to the EU in 2004 and support is provided to exporters only by market information practices and assistance for participation in related international fairs. Furthermore, Cyprus has also adopted the EU single market rules which are strengthening competitiveness in all aspects of the economy, including specific efforts for legislative control of unfair trading practices in agriculture. Cyprus has also implemented relevant efforts that promote the use of local food systems based on short circuits between producers and consumers.

In conclusion, with the Rural Development Programme put in place and its EU participation, Cyprus can point to fairly good progress and will continue to work for the full achievement of this sustainable development goal, implementing related European and national policies and reviewing progress made.



### **SDG 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

The Republic of Cyprus takes pride in successfully completing a number of the SDG3 targets in full. Those are the Maternal Mortality Ratio, (SDG 3.1.1); the Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (SDG 3.1.2); the Under-five mortality rate (SDG 3.2.1); the Neonatal Mortality Ratio, (SDG 3.2.2); the number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases (SDG 3.5.5); the suicide mortality rate and the deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination (SDG 3.9).

Despite high scores in the majority of the SDG3 targets, as will be further analyzed below, a major challenge is the absence of a Universal Health Coverage. It is estimated that 75% of the population have the right to health care by the Public Health System (626/900). According to the Information provided by the Health Insurance companies, 23% of the population is covered by private health insurance. Cyprus is currently in the process of introducing a National Health Care System. More specifically, the NHIS draft Bill was approved by the Ministerial Council and was henceforth submitted to the House of Representatives, where its article by article examination by the Health Committee commenced on November 24th 2016. The review of the Bill by the Health Committee is currently in its final stages. Once the NHS Bill is adopted by the Parliament,

the First Phase of the NHS (FD, Outpatient Specialist, Drugs and Laboratories) will be implemented on 1st June 2019, while the second (and final) phase (full NHS implementation - Inpatient, A&E, Ambulance, Rehabilitation, Dentist, Palliative, Allied Health Professionals) will be implemented on 1st June 2020<sup>1</sup>.

The main goals of the NHIS are increasing life expectancy and life-long health; guaranteeing the sustainable financing of the health-care system; decreasing the number of new HIV cases and reducing the number of injuries and death from injuries, as well as prevention. Specifically, NHIS implementation will contribute to:

- Better utilization of resources of both the public and the private sector, resulting in market normalization
- Universal health coverage of the population
- Reduction of inequalities in health care through equal treatment of beneficiaries
- Better control of health spending and better use of resources
- Improvement of quality of health care, amongst others through competition
- Reduction of out-of-pocket payments and economic protection of the population from illness
- Transparency in the health care sector.

In the meantime, Cyprus already has numerous policies in place covering various SDG3 targets:

- Related to target 3.7, a strategy on the sexually and reproductive health was currently prepared and a workshop of all stakeholders involved under the auspices of the Worth Health Organization was planned for June 2017.
- Target 3.3 a Strategic Plan on Control HIV/AIDS epidemic is in place and a National Committee implemented the various actions under the Ministry of Health, in which different government and non-governmental organizations were represented. A National Strategy to control tuberculosis was developed and approved by the Council of Ministers in 2016. A National Committee nominated by the Minister of Health is responsible for its implementation. The target is to reach a steady downward trend in the spread of HIV, hence the following activities are being carried out: prevention activities for various target groups; HIV testing and counselling; prevention of HIV and AIDS, as well as treatment, care, monitoring and assessment; developing the related human and organisational resources.
- A significant number of activities are undertaken or planned regarding target 3.4. The Council of Ministers adopted a Strategy to control Diabetes in 2016 and the relevant National Committee in which all stakeholders involved were represented is responsible for its implementation. A Mental Health Strategy is in place and incorporated in the Strategic Plan 2017-2019, It prioritises the increasing problem of depression and the prevention of mental health concerns targeting vulnerable population as early as possible. At the same time, it aims at implementing the mental health reform and deinstitutionalization through the development and expansion of Community Mental Health Services. Preventive Program on Detection and Treatment of Depression in Children and Adolescents.

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<sup>1</sup> Financial services like medical insurance can provide a formal channel for mitigating the risks of health emergencies. Women especially have a high demand for health insurance products to address the common health concerns associated with pregnancy and child birth, including greater susceptibility to infection. For example, emerging research in Jordan suggests that insurance can help women defray treatment costs and manage health-related shocks that would otherwise disrupt their economic activities and result in lost income (Women's World Banking 2012). Yet, to date, research on micro health insurance is limited, but a study on the adoption of micro health schemes found practically no evidence that it improved welfare, suggesting the need to rethink the design of the involved product offerings (Cole 2015). Furthermore, new products designed to leverage digital payments technology might help reduce medical expenses and increase transparency of health subsidies. For instance, ongoing research in Kenya tests the introduction of a "mobile health wallet" that operates on the M-Pesa mobile money platform and is restricted to conditional spending at select healthcare providers (Pharm Access 2014). Savings also is an important tool for managing medical expenses, whether planned or unplanned. In a field experiment in Kenya, Dupas and Robinson (2013) found that providing people with a safe yet informal place to store money increased their health savings by 66 percent. They also observed that study participants highly valued earmarking funds for medical emergencies. Access to formal, interest-bearing accounts can further increase the value of these investments. A study in Nepal found that when hit with health shocks, households with savings accounts suffered smaller income drops than households without savings accounts (Prina 2013).

- A National Strategy for the **Prevention of Road Traffic Injuries** is in place and is under the coordination of the Ministry of Transport Communication and Works dealing not only with prevention but also responding to all road traffic accidents regarding target 3.6. Similarly, the Action Plan on Childhood Injuries Prevention, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2017, dedicates a particular pillar on Road Injuries.
- On **Industrial Pollution Control and Air Quality**, the Republic of Cyprus has designed a specific policy with main objective the prevention, reduction and control of air pollution arising from industrial installations, so that the best possible protection of health and welfare of workers, citizens and the environment is safeguarded. The achievement of this objective is materialized through:
  - The effective implementation of the specific legislation for the control of industrial air pollution, on the basis of which an integrated system of prevention and control has been established. This system includes the licensing of industrial installations and the monitoring of their operation.
  - The continuous monitoring of the concentration of various air pollutants in the atmospheric environment as well as with the assessment and management of air quality. Furthermore, the Council of Ministers approved an Action Plan for Air Quality Improvement. As part of the Action Plan, the governance dealing with issues related to the management and control of chemical products by safeguarding the conformity of chemicals produced, distributed, placed on the market or used in a working or domestic environment and protecting the environment. The complete control of hazardous chemical substances is accomplished through the enforcement of the National, European and International legislation for chemicals (REACH, CLP and PIC Regulations, Rotterdam (PIC) and Stockholm (POPs) Conventions).

The Republic of Cyprus recognises that health is a necessary component for socio-economic stability, and an essential aspect of sustainable development (SDGs 1, 3, 5). Achieving optimal health, including access to necessary health care, food, water, clean air, sanitation, hygiene and medicines, is a fundamental right. Taking into consideration the global trend of increased longevity and subsequent lack of support systems for the elderly, as well as the increased of spreading various types of health risks due to global movements, investments in health are a reinvestment in the development of society as a whole. Scoring high in most of the SDG3 targets, the greatest challenge for the Republic of Cyprus is the introduction of a National Health System and its implementation, in order to achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, for which additional budget will be necessary.



## **SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

Cyprus has already made significant progress in the implementation of the SDG4 and its targets, as many of those are interlinked with EU actions, in the framework of the ET2020, which is already in place. The overview presented below aims to highlight the most recent and relevant initiatives, undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) and other relevant stakeholders, contributing to the achievement of SDG4.

The main mission is the continuous upgrade of education in order to ensure the provision of learning opportunities to all learners, through the implementation of an educational policy which embodies the values of equality, inclusivity, creativeness and innovation, aiming at a life-long, balanced and wholesome development, while, in parallel, strengthening culture and supporting cultural creativity.

Cyprus aims towards the formulation of literate citizens with skills, responsibility, democratic ethos, historical identity as well as respect for diversity. Citizens with a holistic personality, capable to creatively contribute to the development of society and to cope with the challenges

of the future, as well as to the improvement of citizens' quality of life through education and culture.

To this end, Cyprus provides free and easily accessible education to everyone at all education levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary general and secondary technical and vocational education and training), without discrimination. One year of pre-primary education, six years of primary education and three years of lower secondary education are compulsory and provided for free to all children, irrespective of the residential status of the students' parents. Pre-primary, primary and secondary schools are established and functioning in all towns and rural areas. The latter safeguards the right of all students for full access to different levels of education.

**Pre-primary education:** Day nurseries are open to children under the age of 4 <sup>8/12</sup> years and, along with the child-minders, are subject to inspection by the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. Public kindergartens are open to children of 3 - 5 <sup>8/12</sup> years of age. Attendance for 4 <sup>8/12</sup> – 5 <sup>8/12</sup> year olds is free and compulsory. Cyprus has a low participation rate in early childhood education (89, 6%) and remains below the EU average (93,2%). Reaching the ambitious national target of 95% by 2020 requires systematic efforts from all stakeholders as well as a more coherent education policy, focusing on encouraging and motivating families to enroll their younger children at kindergartens. This can be achieved by increasing the number of available places.

**Primary education:** Primary school classes consist of children with mixed academic abilities and several ethnic groups (including migrants and refugees). The needs of the aforementioned groups are met, among others, through various educational programmes such as Environmental, Health and Museum Education. In order to enable the smooth integration of foreign pupils into the educational system, an intensive programme of learning Greek as a second language is provided for at least one year.

The improvement of pupils' language and mathematical skills is emphasised at all levels of education (primary and secondary). Cyprus' results in the TIMSS 2015 international study revealed that primary students performed quite well in mathematics and less good in science. Specifically in mathematics the national average was 523 (international average 500), which was improved compared to the 2003 results (510). In Science, the corresponding average was 481 (below the international average 500), similar to the 2003 results (480).

**Secondary Education:** As of September 2015 the number of weekly teaching periods increased from 37 to 38. The need to improve pupils' language and mathematical skills is emphasized at all levels of school education. Since 2016, special interest schools for music and sports operate at all districts of the country. More modifications are also introduced through the modernized Lyceum system, which provides for six concrete streams of specialization (combinations of subjects) and a thorough reorganization. The programme "*School and Social Inclusion Actions*", funded by the European Social Fund, tackles issues related to low performance, truancy and early school leaving in primary and secondary education through a series of positive actions. The programme is also set to contribute to alleviating inequalities in the participating schools.

The proportion of low achievers in Cyprus is the largest in the EU for mathematics (43 %) and science (42 %), and it is the third largest for reading (36 %) according to results from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2015). The results for Cyprus have further deteriorated in comparison to 2012 in all tested areas, placing the country well below both the OECD and the EU averages.

To face the challenges arising from the TIMSS (primary education) and PISA (secondary education) results the relevant Ministry has put in place the following measures:

- Redesigning of curriculum in all school subjects targeting core skills and key competences.
- Setting of Success and Adequacy Indicators, in an attempt to evaluate the extent to which these competences have been achieved,

- Implementation of new timetables to tackle the above results, providing more teaching time for subjects such as mathematics,
- Development of a comprehensive action plan for the improvement of student learning outcomes at all school levels.

A national survey is carried out by the Ministry, at the 3rd and 6th grade of elementary school, aiming to identify illiterate pupils in Language and Mathematics. Based on the results of the survey, various actions are carried out at school level (primary and secondary) to support these pupils. Regarding early school leaving, the corresponding rate decreased from 6.8 % in 2014 to 5.3 % in 2015, well below the EU average of 11.0 % in 2015. While native-born students have an early school leaving rate of only 3.1 %, the rate for foreign-born is 16.7% of which females account for 10.7 %, and males for 23.3 %.

It should be noted at this point that entrepreneurship education is introduced, since 2015, as an optional cross curricula topic in both primary and secondary education, while the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute also provides training courses for entrepreneurship education to primary and secondary school teachers.

### **Technical, Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) offers a wide range of technical and vocational education, initial training and lifelong training programmes to all eligible gymnasium leavers and adults. The STVE programmes are offered at Technical Schools, free of charge, in two directions (theoretical and practical). The total duration of studies is three years. The Department of STVE, through the provision of qualified teachers and proper teaching equipment and supplies, aims at preparing STVE graduates to be employed in industry with favourable terms or to pursue further studies in institutions of tertiary education.

Additionally, the Department of STVE offers formal education programmes through two Evening Technical Schools operating as second chance schools, as well as other lifelong learning programmes, aiming to further promote participation in STVET and support the integration of school dropouts in the workplace and in society in general. The programmes and leaving certificate offered by the Evening Technical Schools are equivalent to the secondary technical and vocational education programmes offered in mainstream Technical Schools. In cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, VET programmes are offered on the premises of the Central Prison in order to offer prisoners a real opportunity to re-integrate into society.

Other STVET lifelong training programmes covering both secondary and tertiary education levels include the following:

**Evening Classes of Technical and Vocational Education** that operate on the premises of Technical Schools, in all major towns of Cyprus or three-year programmes aiming to offer continuing education and training to employed or unemployed adults, in order to be able to respond more effectively to the contemporary demands of the labour market. Individuals attending the above programmes pay limited fees approved by the Council of Ministers.

**Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (PSIVET)**, operating since 2012: they provide students with the necessary qualifications by imparting academic and technical knowledge, as well as professional and practical skills. Additionally, they offer students the possibility to develop such skills that will facilitate them to adapt to the changing needs of industry and the labour market. The PSIVET provide secondary education graduates and adults the opportunity to acquire, improve or upgrade their qualifications and skills. Attendance is free of charge. The PSIVET are envisaged to contribute to tackling the problem of skills mismatches and youth unemployment, since the programmes offered have been designed, after consultation with social partners and stakeholders, to respond to the requirements of emerging economic sectors and be relevant to labour market needs.



**New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA):** it provides an alternative pathway for education, training and development for young people who dropout from the formal education system and is geared towards meeting the needs of the labour market. It is worth mentioning the recent referencing of the **Cyprus Qualifications Framework (CYQF)** to the EQF, which is directly linked to the development of the validation of non-formal and informal learning process, allowing easier transition between several education and training sectors and the recognition of learning outcomes gained outside the official educational system. However, the establishment of mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning is still in progress. Participation in vocational education and training in Cyprus is relatively low, pointing to potential scope for raising the relevance and attractiveness of the Cyprus VET system, especially among the female population.

### **School Infrastructure and resources**

The Technical Services responsible for the development of the public educational infrastructure cover all needs with limited financial resources due to the recent financial crisis. The programme of anti-earthquake upgrading is completed at 80% and is expected to cover all schools in the next few years. Further, there is a systematic effort to increase the added value of existing schools by extending school buildings (laboratories and athletic infrastructure facilities). There is also an effort regarding the allocation of resources, for the environmental and energy-efficiency upgrading of schools. The aim of this effort is to create a secure, creative and pleasant school environment that is accessible by everyone.

Schools increase access for individual pupils with impairments by making reasonable adjustments. These include lighting and paint schemes to help visually impaired children, lifts and ramps to help physically impaired children, carpeting of classrooms to help hearing impaired pupils. The MoEC also provides schools with special equipment such as wheelchairs, walking aids etc. to be used by disabled children. Transportation is provided to all disabled and other eligible children who do not attend neighbouring schools for free. It is noted that less than 1% of children with disabilities are educated in Special Classes. All schools receive substantial support and a range of resources such as specialised teachers, care assistants, special equipment and educational materials. Curriculum is made accessible with the use of assistive technology and other specialized educational material.

However, the MoEC recognizes that there is still room for further reforms in the area of special education, all the more so in the framework of the “UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”. To this end, the MoEC has given instructions for the appointment of a committee of ministry officials with the mandate to formulate recommendations on reforms deriving from the Convention. A policy paper is being drafted for public consultation. Finally, an inter-ministerial Committee consisted by the Ministers of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Health, and Education and Culture, has been appointed by the Council of Ministers in order to discuss possible measures regarding issues affecting people with disabilities.

### **Adult Education**

The Republic of Cyprus does not have a comprehensive Adult Education policy on adult education or a competent authority coordinating the various courses for adults. The gradual implementation of the national comprehensive Lifelong Learning (LLL) Strategy 2014-2020 (adopted by the Council of Ministers Decision on 06.08.2014) has set the national target in terms of the proportion of the adult population participating in education and training for 2020 to 12%. However, this participation is still low (7.5% in 2015 compared to 10.7% at EU level). MoEC offers a variety of programmes that fall within the spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning in a lifelong learning perspective. These programmes, that are provided by almost all Directorates (Primary, Secondary, Technical and Vocational) are regulated by different laws and decisions, and refer to target groups from all educational levels.

### **Tertiary Education and Scholarships**

Cyprus has a very high tertiary educational attainment rate at 54.6 % (2015). At the same time,

foreign-born students have a much lower participation rate than native-born ones (25.4 points in 2015). The employment rate of recent tertiary graduates is relatively high (73.6 % in 2015). In Cyprus 44 % of students were in the fields of social science, business and law in 2014, one of the largest shares of students in all EU Member States, while a relatively low proportion of students chose fields related to innovation. Cyprus authorities have encouraged tertiary education institutions to offer more short vocationally-oriented programmes, which are presently lacking. These are needed in areas of strong demand, especially in the natural resources sector. A scheme to employ and train tertiary education graduates aims to provide opportunities for former students below 30 years of age, with a goal to enable graduates to secure a suitable job and acquire work experience as well as specialised knowledge and skills. It is worth mentioning that a high share of tertiary graduates is working in occupations that do not necessarily require a university degree.

Since November 2015 a new Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education has been established. Till today, more than 90 programmes of study have been evaluated. The question of ensuring proper quality assurance and accreditation of institutions and programmes - and particularly in private colleges - will constitute a test case for Cyprus in the near future. A number of scholarships are provided to students from developing countries (e.g. African countries, Syria, Jordan) from public and private universities. Around 100 students are benefited from these scholarships each year, which mainly cover postgraduate studies.

### Teacher's Trainings

A new professional learning system for teachers and teaching both in elementary and secondary education was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2015. It has been piloted in several schools since September 2015 and has been evaluated with positive results. The system, based on the individual needs of the teachers and the requirements of their schools, is set to better provide for the professional development of teachers leading to a positive impact on students' learning outcomes and quality in education.

The knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development are effectively addressed and promoted on a more systematic and regular basis through the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), a complementary subject taught in formal (Pre-Primary and Primary Education) and non-formal teaching environments (Environmental Education Centres) based on the application of the National Action Plan on ESD and several international conventions. The skills and knowledge needed to promote sustainable development are also touched upon in schools of secondary education, in a cross-curricular way through a variety of subjects and programmes.

Parallel to the above, the MoEC is also undertaking initiatives and actions regarding the promotion of human rights education, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. Possible synergies and enhanced coordination between the several departments undertaking the aforementioned actions would be to the benefit of the school system and the quality of education.

The Republic of Cyprus, having youth as a priority, confirms its commitment to implement SDG4 and to further mainstream its targets into its policies. To this end, the relevant Ministry will be supportive towards the European Commission's intention to ensure that EU policies continue to be linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and will largely undertake actions, such as the implementation of the recently launched "*National Youth Strategy 2017-2022*", aiming to ensure the diffusion of the SDGs to all areas of its jurisprudence, namely, the Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

## SDG 5. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

Cyprus has national legislation in place that protects all women against gender inequality, whether they work in full-time or part-time jobs, permanent work placement or on contract, low skilled or high skilled jobs. The relevant laws are the *Equal Treatment of Men and Women*



*in Employment and Vocational Training Law* (Law 205(I)/2002) and the *Maternity Protection Law* (Law 100(I)/1997). This legislation has set a high level of protection from discrimination with regards to sex for women, but also for men, as regards their access to employment and at all stages of a work relationship. Great emphasis is given to the protection of maternity and pregnant women from being adversely affected due to their pregnancy.

For the better harmonization with European Directives 76/207/EEC, 2002/73/EC and 2006/54/EC, the national Law 205(I)/2002 was amended in 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2009, with amending Laws 191(I)/2004, 40(I)/2006, 176(I)/2007 and 39(I)/2009 respectively. With the latest amendment, the *Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training (Amendment)* Law of 2009 (39(I)/2009) provides for the following, among others:

- It revises the definition of “sex discrimination”, “direct discrimination” and “indirect discrimination” in such a way as to strengthen the protection afforded to victims of discrimination.
- It ensures equal treatment for both sexes as regards their membership of, and involvement in, an organization of workers or employers or any organization whose members carry on a particular profession, including the benefits provided for by such organizations.
- It clarifies the burden of proof rule and ensures that complainants can submit their complaints even if the employment relationship has ended.
- It strengthens the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training’s independence and improves its structural characteristics and functionality, by allowing the Committee to buy the services of experts to assist it with its duties and goals, including the provision of independent assistance to victims of discrimination.

The Maternity Protection Law (Law 100(I)/1997) provides for maternity leave of a total of 18 weeks and ensures protection from dismissal for pregnant workers, provided that they have notified their employer in writing of their pregnancy. The Maternity Protection Law (amending law No. 70(I)/2011) has further enhanced the protection afforded to pregnant workers as follows:

- It prohibits the dismissal, notice of dismissal and actions taken to ensure the total and final replacement of a pregnant employee. The period of protection begins once the pregnant employee notifies the employer of the fact that she is pregnant in writing (whether this is a simple letter, an email, a fax etc.) and ends three months after the end of maternity leave.
- In cases where the employee is dismissed, or given a notice for dismissal before she has a chance to notify the employer of her pregnancy in writing, then she is allowed five days in which she must bring a medical certificate that confirms her pregnancy. Once she notifies her employer of this fact, as mentioned above, within the five working days, he/she must recall the dismissal and hire her back for the entire period of protection.
- In cases where the baby is hospitalized right after delivery for 21 days, the mother is entitled to an extra week of maternity leave. For every additional 50% of the 21 days that the baby is hospitalized, the mother is entitled to another week of maternity leave. The maximum that she is allowed to take is 6 additional weeks.
- When returning to work, the pregnant employee’s rights are safeguarded, including benefits that are related to the post of work, but not including bonuses that are dependent on the quantity or value of work produced.

The Protection of Maternity Legislation has been amended in 2011 and 2015 with Laws 70(I)/2011 and 175(I)/2015 respectively. Following these amendments, the improvements to the level of protection were afforded to pregnant women, that include prohibition of dismissal of pregnant workers provided they have informed the employer in writing; prohibition of actions that might lead to the worker’s permanent replacement; protective measures from being fired following oral notification of the worker’s pregnancy; prohibition of dismissal due to child adoption or intention to adopt; additional four weeks of maternity leave in case of multiple births; extension of maternity leave in case of premature labour or infant hospitalization.

An inspection mechanism has been set up, so that inspections are carried out in order to safeguard the enforcement of Equality Laws (equal treatment for men and women, irrespective of color and ethnic origin). The inspections fall under the umbrella of the inspection units for undeclared and illegal work.

The Gender Equality Committee was established in 2002, by the Equal Treatment of Women and Men in Employment and Vocational Training Law (Law 205(I)/2002). The Committee is responsible for promoting social dialogue between the representatives of employers and the representatives of employees, as well as with non-governmental organizations that have a legitimate interest in promoting equality between men and women. Furthermore, it can review the laws and regulations that govern labour relations in relation to matters of equality between men and women and suggest their re-examination.

The Committee can also suggest projects, carry out research or collect statistical data regarding equality between men and women in employment. It can submit or accept complaints that relate to the violation of the provisions of the abovementioned legislation, which it then forwards to the Inspectors who are responsible for carrying out the relevant research. Moreover, it has been appointed as the competent body for providing victims of discrimination with independent assistance, including legal representation in Court. The Gender Equality Committee's mandate has greatly empowered efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace through a significant number of publications and information dissemination through radio and TV spots on the subject.

As regards equal pay, the Equal Pay between Men and Women for the Same Work, or for Work to which Equal Value is Attributed Law, has been in force since January 2003. The Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure Law, has been in force since January 2003 (it was replaced in 2012 by a new Law). A Project named "*Actions for reducing the gender pay gap*", with a budget of €2 m., which was co-financed by the European Social Fund and consisted of a broad mix of measures, aiming at combating the root causes of the gender pay gap was carried out during the period 2010-2015.

The Project included, among other actions, the following:

- Officers and inspectors of the Ministry dealing with equal treatment in employment and equal pay legislations, were specially trained on complaints handling, inspection procedures, and job evaluation issues.
- 8.612 primary and secondary education teachers, 143 school career advisers and 3.268 parents were trained on how to fight occupational segregation, by eliminating gender stereotypes off students' educational and career choices.
- The National Certification Body awarded 40 businesses with the "Equality Employer" or "Best Practice" award.
- 35 certification consultants were trained for assisting companies with the procedure of applying for a certification by the National Certification Body.
- "Equal Pay Day" has been organized twice

Aiming to award enterprises that incorporate equal treatment and/or equal pay principles in their working environment, or apply best practices regarding equal treatment, equal opportunities, reconciliation of work and family life, or equal pay, a Gender Equality Certification Body was established in April 2014. Its decision making body is the Council, which is tripartite and consists of representatives of employers' associations and trade unions, and is chaired by the General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice. . Two types of certifications are awarded, namely (a) the "Equality Employer" certification to companies that implement comprehensive policies to promote gender equality, and (b) the "Best Practice" certification to companies that apply best practices promoting gender equality. Applications from 40 companies have been received so far, and 20 certifications have already been awarded during special ceremonies organized by the Ministry.

Important policies are also in place related to SDG 5.2 (Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation). According to the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Laws L.119 (I)/2000 and L.212 (I)/2004, services are provided to all victims of violence in the family. The Government implements various policies and measures to combat domestic violence- encouragement to report cases of violence, awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the general public and women in particular, systematic training of professionals working in the field, strengthening of the Police Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office, Government support to NGOs providing protection and assistance to women victims, improvement of data collection, as well as the development of research in the field.

The Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, established in 1996, aims to create a data bank on family violence. The Committee is comprised of Government competent agencies and NGOs-Association for the Prevention of Violence in the Family, Association of Psychologists, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Association for Promoting Psychological Health of Children and Teenagers, Family Planning Association.

There are currently two shelters for victims of violence in the family operated by an NGO (the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family) receiving state funding.

The new Action Plan on the Prevention and Combatting of Domestic Violence 2017-2019 which has been prepared by the Advisory Committee on the Prevention and Combatting of Domestic Violence and which is expected to be approved by the Council of Ministers soon, includes measures for:

1. The prevention of domestic violence
2. The training of professionals
3. The effective enforcement of domestic violence legislation
4. The enhancing of the protection and support services to victims of domestic violence

### **Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group against Trafficking in Human Beings**

The Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG) against Trafficking in Human Beings, chaired by the Minister of Interior, in his capacity as the National Coordinator, operates institutionally since 2007. The role of the MCG is for policy-making, for taking practical and operational measures and for coordination of actions to address the problem and examine solutions. The Group is composed of all the relevant government services and of up to four NGOs.

### **National Action Plan against Human Trafficking 2016-2018 (NAP):**

The 2016-2018 Action Plan emerged from the evaluation of the previous Action Plan 2013-2015, the proposals of members of the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group, and the provisions of Directive 2011/36/EU and of the European Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016. It has taken into account the recommendations of GRETA (the Council of Europe Committee of Experts) and the US State Department Report (TIP Report 2016). The priorities in the implementation of the Action Plan are the amendment of the existing legislation, the support to victims with special emphasis on safe accommodation, the training of frontline officers, the training of judges, and the promotion of cooperation protocols between NGOs and government agencies.

### **National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – Guide for handling victims of trafficking:**

The NRM was drafted by the MCG and adopted in May 2016. It defines the cooperation framework between the relevant services and between the relevant services and NGOs, in order to ensure the access of victims to their rights and to create a protective framework. The NRM provides mapping of the processes and the role of each government agency and competent NGOs and the coordination of action for the effective referral of the victims.

### **Strengthening of the Police Anti-Trafficking Bureau**

Due regard is given to the effective enforcement of the existing legislation and, in particular, investigation of acts of trafficking and the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators. Since March 2015, the role and competences of the Police Anti-Trafficking Bureau have been expanded. Specialized investigators have joined existing staff, undertaking tasks within an



upgraded framework. The empowerment of the Police Anti-Trafficking Bureau is aimed at providing qualitative, proper and in-depth investigation of trafficking cases by the Police, as well as improving the operational aspect of police actions. Since its expansion, the number of convictions has increased.

Concerning SDG 5.4 (recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate), the Guaranteed Minimum Income Scheme provides the framework for two mechanisms, namely social care and social intervention to GMI recipients. Social care provides for the subsidization of the cost of home, institutional, respite and day care including child care of GMI recipients. Social Intervention refers to the activation and social inclusion of GMI recipients. This action includes a wide spectrum of services provided to a person or family unit receiving the GMI that will empower and support them in their social integration. The ultimate purpose of this action is the employment rehabilitation through co-operation with the Public Employment Services (PES). Activation measures targeted at Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) beneficiaries involving training and development interventions as well as participation in public benefit programmes, are starting to roll out. The measure is related to the labor market, education and social challenges and to the employment national target.

Regarding the provision of social care programmes, the Government is focusing on the provision of accessible, affordable and quality social care programmes at local level (i.e. child care services, long-term social care services to the elderly and persons with disabilities, counselling services). In this direction, the Government through the competent Service (Social Welfare Services) is implementing the State Aid Scheme, under the Regulation 360/2012 for the provision of services of general economic interest (*De minimis*) where NGOs and Local Authorities may receive state aid based on certain criteria for the development and functioning of social care programmes. In 2016, 252 organizations received state aid for the operation of quality social care programmes with a total budget of around 7 ml euros.

In addition, the Social Welfare Services supervise the minimum quality standards of care structures according to the relevant legislations. Towards assuring the improvement of the quality of care services provided by the private sector (private for profit, NGOs and LAs), the Social Welfare Services are in the process of amending the existing legislative framework on minimum standards of care structures and are also drafting a new Law on home careers.

Despite the significant positive developments, traditional perceptions regarding the role of women and men, gender stereotypes continue to impede de facto realization of gender equality. This is reflected, *inter alia*, in the under-representation of women in political and public life. Based on this acknowledgment, Cyprus is determined to intensify its efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes, primarily in the sphere of education and the media. More specifically, we intend and plan to continue our efforts and work intensively and effectively towards the following goals:

- Changing social attitudes among women and men with regard to gender equality issues and eliminating gender stereotypes, which are still identified as the major obstacles for the advancement of women. This is one of the priorities of the Strategic Plan on Gender Equality and an issue which will be tackled in the framework of the educational reform, which is under way.
- Better enforcement of the legislation safeguarding women's rights through awareness raising programmes, specialized training of relevant professionals, as well as the strengthening of the institutional framework, in particular, with additional human and financial resources.
- Promoting further positive action measures, as well as gender mainstreaming in all Government policies including gender budgeting.
- Closing the pay-gap through concrete measures including the elimination of gender stereotypes, specialized training programmes for inspectors, the financing of equality schemes of enterprises, as well as measures for eliminating occupational and sectorial segregation.

- Reconciliation of professional and family life, including the expansion and improvement of child care facilities and the improvement of parental leave legislation is becoming a central issue for women's participation in employment and political life.
- Promoting a balanced participation of women and men at the decision making level of public and political life through the implementation of a number of concrete measures, as foreseen in the Strategic Plan on Gender Equality including research, awareness raising campaigns and other positive action measures.



## **SDG 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

Access to good quality water in sufficient quantities is fundamental to the daily lives of every human being and to most economic activities. While all households in Cyprus are connected to public water supply with improved sanitation facilities, the primary objective at national level is ensuring availability of water for all uses to the maximum extent possible, in the framework of an integrated and sustainable water policy. To this effect, the Integrated Water Management Law and the Water Protection and Management Law, which transposes the EU Water Framework Directive into national legislation, provide the legal framework to ensure sustainable and integrated water resources management in Cyprus.

Water scarcity has always been a major challenge for Cyprus, which is among the EU Member States with the least available water per capita. Being a small island, Cyprus faces additional challenges, compared to mainland countries, and is more vulnerable to climate change. Like other Mediterranean countries, Cyprus has a semi-arid climate and limited water resources which depend mainly on rainfall. However, rainfall is unevenly distributed with considerable regional variations, water resources are scarce and expensive to exploit and droughts occur frequently.

Climate change is already affecting Cyprus in a number of ways. Statistical analysis reveals a stepped drop of precipitation in Cyprus in the early 70's, which persists, while climate models for this region also predict a rise in temperature and an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme drought events. These conditions, coupled with increased water demands mainly due to population growth, are aggravating the water scarcity problem on the island.

In order to address this challenge and improve the reliability of the water sources for domestic and irrigation uses, optimum use of non-conventional water resources, such as desalination and recycling, are being promoted. In particular, with the completion of all desalination units, except the Paphos desalination plant which is planned for the near future, the potable water dependency of the large urban, suburban and tourist centers on rainfall has been eliminated. Furthermore, two domestic water supply projects are also in progress, the Vasilikos to Western Nicosia Conveyor Water Supply Project, which is co-financed by the European Investment Bank and the Kokkinokremmos Water Supply Project.

Recycled water is a growing and stable resource, and increasing quantities of tertiary treated urban wastewater under strict quality standards and controls are used for irrigation and recharge of aquifers to manage sea water intrusion or for later abstraction for irrigation use. The use of recycled water is expected to increase the supply of water for irrigation, ensure protection against drought and contribute in the water balance, enabling the best allocation of available water resources for all uses. Two projects are under way, the Anthoupolis Water Reuse Scheme, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Larnaca Water Reuse Scheme, which is funded by the European Cohesion Fund.

Regarding the water pricing policy, incentive water pricing based on metering, volumetric pricing and rising block tariffs has been in place for many years now. Furthermore the Pricing and Cost Recovery of Water Services Regulations (128/2014) harmonised the existing water pricing policy with Article 9 of the Water Framework Directive and set the legal framework for the inclusion of the environmental and resource costs into water pricing.

Effective water demand management is also one of Cyprus' priorities as it is a fundamental condition for the exercise and application of a sustainable water policy. To this end, various measures, aiming at further improving the good practices for water consumption and reuse, are being implemented. Cyprus' water policy has been driven by EU legislation, which provides for a framework to comprehensively address water protection and for achieving good water quality. It comprises legislation, among others, on drinking water, bathing water and urban waste water treatment, prevention of pollution caused by nitrates, industrial emissions, pesticides and persistent organic pollutants.

Moreover, the Water and Soil Pollution Control Law provides for control of discharges to water and soil, where illegal direct and indirect discharges are considered criminal offences. The Law ensures water protection through a permitting and inspection system, where the Minister issues permits to industries, livestock farms, mines, waste management facilities, etc. Inspections are carried out to all facilities and activities that may pollute the environment and all complaints are investigated. The implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, which aims at protecting and improving the status of waters, is a priority. At the same time, it is important to strengthen the resilience of the aquatic ecosystem, in order to adapt to climate change. In this context, the 2<sup>nd</sup> River Basin Management Plan and Programme of Measures were adopted on 7 October 2016. A Drought Management Plan has also been adopted. The 1<sup>st</sup> Flood Risk Management Plan, which has been developed in coordination with the 2<sup>nd</sup> RBMP has also been concluded and adopted on 12 December 2016.

In the field of waste water, the full implementation of the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive is a priority. Based on Article 15 of the Directive, with reference date 31 December 2014, the proportion of wastewater load collected and receiving secondary treatment is 74,2%. Full compliance is expected to be met by 2027. As regards the quality of drinking water, according to the Synthesis Report adopted by the European Commission on October 2016 for the 2011-13 period, Cyprus had a compliance rate between 99-100% for both the microbiological and chemical parameters, reflecting the excellent quality of the drinking water supplied to consumers.

Particular importance is also given to the implementation of other relevant EU Directives, as well as to the relevant national legislation for the protection, monitoring and management of water resources. To this end, relevant European Directives are being transposed into national legislation. The Cyprus water policy also provides the framework for public participation in water management in particular in the production of management plans. Furthermore, the Integrated Water Management Law provides for an "Advisory Committee on Water Management", with participation of representatives of all the water stakeholders. The "Advisory Committee" advises the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment on issues related to the formulation of the general water policy of the Government, but the ultimate responsible body is the Council of Ministers.

Within the framework of its external relations, its development cooperation policy, the European Neighborhood Policy and the EU Enlargement Policy, the EU, and consequently Cyprus as an EU Member State, is supporting third countries in water and sanitation related activities through bilateral assistance programmes or regional initiatives.

To conclude, Cyprus can point to good achievements and will continue to work for the accomplishment of this sustainable development goal, implementing related European and national water policies and reviewing progress made.



## **SDG 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**

The EU is the largest energy importer in the world, vulnerable to supply shocks. At the same time, energy dependency remains a key issue in Cyprus, which relies heavily on imported

sources (92%) for its energy needs. Consequently, this translates into a very significant energy trade deficit, expressed in percentage of GDP. Hence the importance of energy security, market integration, energy efficiency and using indigenous energy resources, in particular renewables, to reduce our dependence on external suppliers while decarbonizing the economy and stimulating new business sectors. The goal of a resilient Energy Union is at the core of the European Commission's work to give consumers secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy. For the period up to 2020, the Energy Union is complemented by the Europe 2020 Strategy with its headline targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20%, to satisfy 20% of the EU's energy demand with renewables, and to increase energy efficiency by 20% by 2020.

### **Penetration of Renewable Energy Sources**

The 2013 National Renewables Law sets a mandatory national target for 2020 of 13% as the overall share of energy from renewable energy sources in the gross final consumption and the share of energy from renewable sources to 10% of the final energy consumption in transport. The National Action Plan for Renewable Energy Sources (RES) sets a list of measures and renewable energy technologies that will be implemented until 2030 in order to achieve the national targets.

### **Energy efficiency**

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### **Renewable Energy Sources**

With the implementation of the National Action Plan for Renewable Energy Sources and the measures taken by the government, the Republic of Cyprus succeeded in increasing the share of RES in the total final consumption to 9.4% in 2015. With this rate, Cyprus has achieved the intermediate National Action Plan target for renewables in 2015, which is 9%. The average indicative progress for the biennium 2015-2016 is 7.45%. As regards the 10% target of RES in transport, Cyprus has reached 2.43% in 2015. In the framework of establishing a National Strategy to promote alternative fuels in transport to achieve the 10% target of renewable energy in transport by 2020 and the various environmental objectives, a national action framework is being prepared in cooperation with other competent authorities in order to promote environmentally friendly technologies, alternative fuels and ultimately the necessary infrastructure needed. By the end of 2016, approximately 85 MW of photovoltaic systems were installed, 157.5 MW from 5 wind farms and 10.4 MW from 14 biomass plants.

### **Energy Efficiency**

Over half of the planned reduction in primary energy will be achieved through the switch from oil to natural gas in electricity generation. On the energy demand site, special attention is given

in improving the energy efficiency of the construction sector, where the aim is to reduce energy use in a way that will increase wealth, improve quality of life and reduce CO2 emissions. It should be noted that the national Energy Efficiency Action Plan and the national measures are under revision. Even though the current level of primary energy consumption (2.2 MtoE in 2015, 2014 and in 2013) is in line with the national 2020 target (with a slight increase of less than 2% between 2014 and 2015), additional efforts are being made in order to keep the primary energy consumption at the same level or to minimize its increase, in anticipation of GDP increases due to the foreseen economic development in the coming years. The progress towards achieving the national energy efficiency target is being annually monitored by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MECIT).

### **Renewable Energy Sources**

During the second half of 2015 two amendments of the Promotion and Encouragement of the Use of Renewable Energy Sources Law 2013 [N.112 (I)/2013] came into force. The first amendment concerns the imposition of temporary green fee on consumers and renewable energy producers for the purposes of maintaining the RES Fund, while the second amendment concerns the improvement of the regulations governing the function of the certification schemes for RES installers of small-scale biomass boilers and stoves, solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems, shallow geothermal systems and heat pumps. It should be noted that, the green levy was recently increased for the consumers paying an additional tax of 1 eurocent per kWh consumed, as from 1.1.2017 (current levy is 0.5 eurocents per kWh). In the RES Sector, the following measures were also taken:

- Announcement of the support scheme: “*Solar Energy for All*” which provides: (a) the installation of Net-metering photovoltaic systems with capacity up to 5KW connected to the grid for all consumers (residential and non-residential) and (b) the self-generation systems with capacity up to 10.000 kW for commercial and industrial consumers. Further measures were investigated in 2016, some of which are expected to be implemented in 2017, in order to cover biomass/biogas units.
- A support scheme for the replacement of old solar domestic hot water heating systems.
- Implementation of the national framework in transport sector with all relevant stakeholders
- Certification of professionals in the field of renewable energy sources.
- Provision of information/education to energy professionals and final consumers on renewable energy systems.
- The National Action Plan for RES for the Electricity Sector has been updated in 2016 to reflect recent developments in the RES sector.
- Political decisions had been put in place for supporting two Concentrated Solar Power plants with a total capacity of 100 MW under NER300 Funding Program.
- Energy Planning and modelling: An energy planning model was developed to quantify the possible pace and benefits of renewable energy deployment given different conditions, which is an important tool for assessing future energy policies and examining different energy pathways. With the use of the above cost optimization tool, the government will determine the optimal penetration of renewable energy for electricity supply and identify the technical and economic potential for further increasing electricity production from renewable energy

### **Energy Efficiency**

Cyprus aims to achieve its energy efficiency target through the implementation of an array of measures which include regulatory changes, provision of financial incentives as well as emphasizing on horizontal issues such as consumer knowledge and information, enhancement of the role of the private sector’s financial institutions, as well as encouraging research and technological development. The most important measures currently in place in order to promote energy efficiency are:

- Setting of minimum energy performance requirements for new buildings, buildings that undergo major renovation and building elements that are retrofitted.



- Issue of Energy Performance Certificates for new buildings and for buildings that are sold or rented.
- Frequent inspection of large air conditioning systems and central heating systems with boiler.
- Implementation of legislation that defines the technical requirements that a NZEB has to fulfil, legislative framework for the promotion of combined heat and power and high efficiency in heating and cooling, legislative framework for regulating the market for energy auditing in buildings, industries and transport and the operation of Energy Service Companies (ESCOs), legislative framework for placing on the market energy related products and in particular regarding their minimum energy efficiency standards (Eco design requirements) and labelling (*Energy Label, Energy Star, Labelling of Tyres*).
- Implementation of energy efficiency measures in the buildings occupied and used by the central government including deep renovations, utilizing EU Structural and Investment Funds of the period 2014-2020.
- Operation of financing schemes for energy upgrade of existing households and buildings of enterprises, utilizing EU Structural and Investment Funds of the period 2014-2020. For the period 2014 – 2020, EU financing of €20 million has been secured for upgrading the energy efficiency of public buildings. As regards the upgrading of the energy efficiency in existing buildings of the private sector, the support scheme “*Save – Upgrade*” is the main financial tool. It is co-financed by EU Structural and Investment Funds and it targets deep renovation of households and buildings used or owned by small and medium size enterprises. Individual measures and higher subsidies for vulnerable consumers.
- Implementation of projects on energy efficiency in street lighting, utilizing national funds.
- Implementation of pilot projects for high efficient heat and power generation, for energy efficiency in public buildings and street lighting utilizing ESCOs and energy performance contracting.
- Implementation of measures in the transport sector, utilizing EU Structural and Investment Funds of the period 2014-2020.
- Implementation of projects for installing smart meters.
- Certification of professionals in the field of energy efficiency.
- VAT reduction from 19% to 5% for major refurbishments of buildings
- Increase of building factor for new buildings and buildings that are renovated if they achieve an A energy class and at least 25% contribution from RES
- Design and implementation of a national energy efficiency campaign for promoting energy efficiency investments, with priority to the investments that significantly contribute in achieving the national 2020 energy efficiency target
- Enhanced cooperation with financing institutions (for increasing allocation of funds for financing energy efficiency investments).

Additionally, the installation of photovoltaic systems in residential buildings and buildings of local authorities is supported by the net metering scheme which was launched in 2013. Photovoltaic systems can also be installed in commercial buildings in order to produce electricity for their own use.

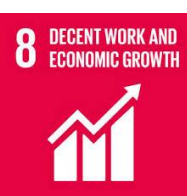
Informing the public as well as the professionals about the benefits of improving energy efficiency is mostly done through workshops, leaflets and advertising flyers. In addition, MECIT organizes or participates in seminars especially directed to professionals in the construction industry and professional organizations. The annual exhibition “*SAVENERGY*” is one of the most important public events in the field of energy efficiency. The exhibition started in 2004 and gives the opportunity to the public to come in direct contact with the companies that provide energy saving systems and renewable energy systems.

A study performed by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), showed that renewable energy offers a way for Cyprus to reduce both the cost and the environmental impact of generating electricity, especially in case of high oil prices. Moreover, the turn towards renewables can help reduce fuel imports, strengthen the trade balance and create local jobs. The study showed that the success of solar water heaters, where Cyprus is the first country in the world in such installations per capita, can be replicated for solar photovoltaic (PV) as well. In addition to the above study, the results of the several studies carried out in 2016 will be exploited

to overcome and tackle technical and non-technical issues related to the further penetration of renewable energy and provide insights on how to overcome technical constraints in the most cost optimum way.

Cyprus has also identified areas where studies are needed for ensuring that the national energy efficiency potential in all sectors of the economy has been well identified and that it will be cost-effectively exploited by 2030. It has also identified the need for establishing an energy efficiency strategy after 2030. For this purpose, and with Technical Assistance provided by the Structural Reform Support Service for Cyprus, a set of studies have been prepared and some others are under preparation, aiming to assist Cyprus in achieving its 2030 energy efficiency target, to prepare its national strategy for energy efficiency for the post 2030 period, and to develop and implement new legislative, financial and awareness raising measures to boost the uptake of energy efficiency measures by 2030 and beyond.

With a renewable energy share of 9.48% in 2015, Cyprus is on track to reach its 13% target in 2020. Regarding energy efficiency, an assessment of the progress can be made by examining the Energy Intensity Index, which is determined as the ratio of primary energy consumption over GDP. Energy Intensity Index provides a good indication on how energy efficient is the economy (In the case of Cyprus the index was 128 kg of oil equivalent/1000 EUR in 2015 compare to 142 in 2010). This reflects the improvements already achieved in the field of energy efficiency.



## **SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

### **Employment – unemployment situation**

The Employment target set for Cyprus within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy is 75-77%. In the first three-quarters of 2016 the employment rate stood at 68.6% compared to 67.9% in 2015. As regards the sectorial distribution of employment, services continued to account for the biggest percentage of employed persons in 2016 with 79.3% compared to 79,8% in 2015, whereas industry accounted for 16.9% compared to 16,2% in 2015 and agriculture for 3.8% compared to 4% in 2015.

Unemployment, which has increased significantly in the past few years because of the economic crisis, started to decrease in 2015 reaching 14.9%, while in 2016 it decreased further to 13%. In 2016, the male unemployment rate decreased to 12, 7% compared to 15, 0 % in 2015, while female unemployment was 13, 4% in 2016, compared to 14, 8% in 2015. The most affected segment of the population is youth, although youth unemployment has been on a downward trend since January 2014. Particularly challenging is also the increase in long-term unemployed. Although the labour market has started recovering, youth and long-term unemployment remain high, in a context of slowly rising job creation.

Long-term unemployment, which has been increasing over the past few years, declined in 2016, reaching 5.7% compared to 6.8% in 2015. The share of young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs) is decreasing. It amounted to 15, 2% in 2015 (age group 15-24) compared to 17% in 2014. The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture, has initiated efforts to identify and reach out to non-registered unemployed young people identified as NEET. The unemployment rate for young people (15-24 years), which rose dramatically during the economic crisis, fell to 28.9% in 2016 compared to 32.8% in 2015. The respective employment rate for this age group increased to 26% in 2016 compared to 25.3% in 2015.

During 2016, several measures were implemented in order to tackle unemployment and increase labour market participation. The measures aimed to facilitate the creation of new jobs (mainly through subsidised employment schemes), the acquisition of work experience (for improving the employability of the unemployed), to address the skills mismatch, to promote entrepreneurship, to address all unemployed as well as long term and youth unemployed, and Public Employment

Services enhancement. The measures introduced were targeted to specific groups of unemployed such as the young, the long-term unemployed and the vulnerable in general.

Youth unemployment is addressed through targeted measures and schemes, with noticeable positive effects. Measures include the implementation of the National Youth Action Plan, the implementation of Activation Measures for the unemployed, women and youth, the long-term unemployed, GMI beneficiaries, training opportunities as well as other measures such as systematic employment forecasting and identifications of skills gap. Also, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance is implementing reform measures which have as a direct effect the enhancement of its Public Employment Services in order to be able to address their current mandate more effectively and efficiently.

### **Main measures implemented for the achievement of national targets:**

#### a) National Action Plan for Youth Employment and Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan

The challenge of youth unemployment is tackled through the National Action Plan for Youth (NAPFY). Youth Guarantee is a major part of the NAPFY, more specifically addressing NEETS 15 – 24 years of age.

The NAPFY has a total budget of €47, 2 mln financed mostly from the European Social Fund (€29, 2 mln), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) (€11, 6 mln) but also from the ERDF (€3,1 mln) and national funds (€3,3 mln). It encompasses a Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) to which funds of €37, 6 mln have been allocated. It includes measures for an early intervention in the form of a Youth Guarantee (YG) to prevent school leavers and newly unemployed individuals in the younger cohort (ages 15-24) from falling into long-term unemployment and inactivity traps. To date, over 1,700 young people have been supported under YEI-financed measures of which 443 are in employment, education and training.

The measures covered under the NAP for Youth Employment during the years 2015-2017 include, among others, timely intervention for early school leavers and easing the transition of young people from school to work, reform of the design and implementation of labour market policies targeting youth, implementation of a national youth guarantee, offering youth, less than 25 years old, education, training and employment opportunities within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed, promotion of entrepreneurship as a career path among young people (e.g. through a Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme and the Social Enterprises Programme available to young people aged 20-35 to set up their own enterprise).

### **Various schemes were implemented in 2016.**

It is worth mentioning that the results of an evaluation study regarding the effectiveness of the YG scheme titled *“Scheme for the job placement of young unemployed graduates of lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary education of up to two years for the acquisition of work experience in enterprises/organizations”* implemented in the previous year showed that approximately 1 in 3 (32,7%) of the participants in the Scheme were employed approximately 4 months after the completion of their participation.

#### b) Schemes Facilitating the Creation of New Jobs (Wage Subsidies Schemes)

Six schemes were implemented in 2016 to help employers hire unemployed persons, including a Scheme Providing Incentives for the Employment of Unemployed People over 50 years old, a Scheme Providing Incentives for the Employment of Persons with Chronic Diseases and a Scheme Providing Incentives for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities and an Incentive Scheme for the Employment of Recipients of the Guaranteed Minimum Income in conjunction with the completion of three months practical training.

#### c) Training Programs

In 2016, the long-term unemployed continue to be a priority group for the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA). The Long-Term unemployed can participate in the HRDA Multi-Company Training Programmes as of 1/1/2016. Multi-company initial training programs include a large number of various courses in different fields. This scheme will offer opportunities to the

long term unemployed to participate in training programmes implemented by Certified Vocational Training Centres.

### **Improvement of outreach to the non-registered unemployed**

The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance promotes the reduction of youth labour market detachment through outreach strategies and partnerships (with the implementation of a national information campaign to raise awareness on decent work for young people and the support provided by labour market institutions including through the National Youth Guarantee) as part of the measures covered under the NAP for Youth Employment during the years 2015-2017.

Among the schemes which have been initiated/implemented is the Scheme targeting NEETS 15-24 years old, which includes outreach activities to attract non-registered NEETS followed up by provision of career counselling.

### **Modernisation of Public Employment Services**

Another key challenge concerns the limited capacity of the Public Employment Services (PES). A series of corrective and enhancing measures to boost PES effectiveness and responsiveness have been under way since 2015 which included strengthening of PES administrative and technical capacity, strengthening of the operation of PES by the creation of an Operational Unit of Employment Counsellors that offered personalised guidance services to the unemployed and funding of the PES structure operation

### **Human resources**

Human resources in Cyprus are characterised by a high level of educational attainment. There is a strong cultural trend among Cypriots in favour of general secondary education followed by higher education. In order to improve the skills of the workforce in Cyprus, the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus implements a variety of measures, which include the provision of training opportunities and job placements for the unemployed, the provision of training opportunities for the employed and the development and implementation of a System of Vocational Qualifications. For the period 2014-2020 various European Social Fund Projects are being implemented, including a Scheme for Job Placement of Unemployed Young Tertiary Education Graduates for the Acquisition of Work Experience in Enterprises and a System of Vocational Qualifications.



## **SDG 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

SDG9 has three major components: infrastructure, industrialization and innovation. These three components are closely linked with each other and with the Smart Specialization Strategy, the Action Plan of the National Coalition for Digital Jobs, the National Digital Strategy, the National Policy Statement for the Enhancement of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Cyprus, and the new Integrated National Industrial Strategy under preparation. Linkages can further be found with the European strategic initiatives, programmes, and policies varying from the Investment Plan for Europe (*'Juncker Plan'*) covering strategic investments in infrastructure, research and innovation, the Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area towards a Competitive and Resource-Efficient Transport System, the EU Regulation on guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, the Connecting Europe Facility funding resilient networks and infrastructures in transport, telecommunications and energy, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020), the Digitizing European Industry (DEI) initiative, the European Commission's Digital Single Market Strategy 2014-2020, to the recent draft of the Council of the European Union Conclusions on 'The Future of the European Union Industry Policy'.

### **Key Challenge:**

- Mapping and matching European and national policies and initiatives to design a new holistic national industrial strategy.

### **European Dimension**

Cyprus as a member of the EU and in an effort to contribute towards the EU target to increase industry's contribution to 20% of European GDP by 2020, is promoting a number of measures and actions.

### **Policy response at National Level**

#### **Digital Strategy for Cyprus**

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) of Cyprus as part of the "Digital Strategy for Cyprus" was initiated by the Department of Electronic Communications of the Ministry of Communications and Works in 2012. Cyprus' broadband targets are in line with the Digital Agenda for Europe (100 % coverage with 30 Mbps until 2020 and 50 % take-up rate for 100 Mbps). The six general objectives of the Digital Strategy are: (1) Connect Cyprus, (2) Modernize public administration and provide public electronic services (3) Inclusion of all (including vulnerable groups) into digital Cyprus (4) Education and Learning, (5) Digital Entrepreneurship, and (6) ICT for the environment. These objectives are strongly linked to targets 9(a), 9(b) and 9(c).

#### **Smart Specialization Strategy for Cyprus**

The Smart Specialisation Strategy of Cyprus, approved in 2015, promotes the knowledge based development potential of the Cyprus economy through targeted support to Research and Innovation, leading to greater competitiveness. The priority areas of the Smart Specialisation Strategy include three horizontal pillars – 'Smart Growth-Sustainable RTDI System-Modernization of the RTDI System' targeted at six priority sectors – 'Tourism, Energy, Agriculture –Food Industry, Construction industry, Transportation, Health, and Environment'.

The Action Plan of S3CY, with measures amounting to €144 mln, is expected to address the main issues of the R&I system in Cyprus such as the inclusion of SMEs in R&I activities, the attraction of private sector in R&I investments, the establishment of synergies between the research and academic community with the business world and the enhancement of extroversion of the Cyprus R&I system.

According to the Smart Specialisation Strategy for Cyprus set in 2015, investment in research and development as a percentage of GDP amounted to 0.48% in 2014 (€84.1mln). The national target for R&D expenditures as a percentage of GDP has been set to reach 0.50% by the year 2020 (no target has been set for the period up to 2030). This target was set taking into consideration the particularities of Cyprus in terms of the size of the research community, the orientation of the economy in low value added products and services and the very small size and low involvement of Cypriot companies in research and innovation activities in terms of participation and expenditure on R&D and innovation. No revision of the target is expected. The government is implementing measures and grant schemes of the Smart Specialization Strategy Action Plan, that will help achieve SDG9 in its whole.

#### **Cyprus' New National Integrated Industrial Strategy**

Additionally, the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, is currently formulating a National Integrated Industrial Strategy 2017-2030 in its overall role in boosting Cyprus' economy and with an aim to increase the industry's contribution from an almost 7% to the GDP and an almost 9% in total employment in 2016 to a higher score (to be determined) until 2030.

Key challenges which the new National Integrated Industrial Strategy is called to face are:

- a) Increasing the growth rate of industry,
- b) Solving industry's structural problems, and



c) Re-industrializing it through particular emphasis on digitization, utilizing both the country's available resources and the European "Industry 4.0" system also known as the "Fourth Industrial Revolution", digital innovation platforms, proper infrastructures and the promotion of clusters.

**These challenges are mainly associated with targets 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5.**

### **Current situation**

**The main Structural Problems faced by the Cyprus Industry today are:**

- excessive dependence on imports and the high production cost,
- the skills gap of human resources in relation to the needs of industry,
- the difficulty of access to finance,
- international competition,
- structural and functional problems of industrial / craft areas / zones,
- the lack of sufficient efforts to create synergies/ partnerships / industrial platforms and/ or clusters in manufacturing and product distribution chains,
- development of sustainable and innovative industry,
- and the low degree of quality certification and unsatisfactory registration of patents and other forms of intellectual property protection (esp. from abroad) for industrial design and further exploitation through licensing and production of new technology.

Investment in research and development as a percentage of GDP amounted to 0.48% in 2014 (€84.1mIn). The national target for R&D expenditures as a percentage of GDP has been set to reach 0.50% by the year 2020 (no target has been set for the period up to 2030). This target was set taking into consideration the particularities of Cyprus in terms of the size of the research community, the orientation of the economy in low value added products and services and the very small size and low involvement of Cypriot companies in research and innovation activities in terms of participation and expenditure on R&D and innovation. No revision of the target is expected. In terms of R&D financing, the Cypriot private sector funded 19.89% of overall R&D expenditure in 2014. The public share in funding of Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) was 56.5%, and the share of GERD financed from abroad was 23.7%.

As regards the number of researchers in Cyprus, these are accounted for 0, 35% of total employment in Cyprus (2014 data). Based on the employment sector, most researchers, with rate up to 47%, are employed by the Higher Education Institutes (HEI), 17% are employed at the public sector, 20% employed by business and 16% employed by non-profit organizations. The way to increase the number of researches is by making more attractive the environment to work in terms of quality of research teams, infrastructures, salaries and career perspectives. A number of measures that will help reduce brain drain and increase the number of researches is expected to be implemented in the coming period. Also, the creation of Centres of Excellence under the Teaming Action of H2020 will be a cornerstone in this effort.

The Europe 2020 Competitiveness Report 'Building a More Competitive Europe' edition 2014, ranked Cyprus in the 20th position in relation to the EU28 with an overall score of 4.2 out of 7(the highest). This score revealed the challenges yet to be satisfactorily addressed such as the lack of ICT readiness, usage and impact), low renewable electricity production rate, high youth unemployment rate, high rate of CO2 emission per energy use, etc.).

The recent European Commission's 2016 Country Paper on Cyprus ('Including an In-Depth Review on the Prevention and Correction of Macroeconomic Imbalances') shows that, despite the stabilization of the financial sector and public finances, Cyprus Continues to face serious challenges in the development of its economy. The document highlights, among other things, the most important problems and repercussions the Cypriot government is facing in this direction, such as:

- Increased unemployment rates among young people and a slow pace of job creation
- High private and business debt and low rate of impairment
- Unsatisfactory export rate and lack of foreign investment
- Limited access for SMEs to funding from both credit institutions and EU funding programs
- Low productivity and high public sector employment cost

- Low human resource expertise and a slow pace of response to customer requirements
- High cost of production and production of electricity
- Lack of an appropriate regulatory framework
- Inefficiency in the health sector
- Slow response of the justice sector

In its recent efforts, Cyprus focused on the public finance and financial sectors rather than on primary, secondary and ICT in the tertiary sector of the economy. The result of this policy was to shrink the productive sector of industry by losing a significant number of jobs. The reduced performance of industry shows that Cyprus has become less attractive to invest in industrial activities. Many of the industries have shut down or operate with fewer resources. In spite of these, and according to the Statistical Service of Cyprus "Industrial Statistics 2015", in 2015 there has been a positive rate of growth of the industry in real terms, after six years of recession. This growth in the whole sector rose by 2.9% in 2015, compared with -0.3% in 2014 and -6.9% in 2013.

### **Digital Strategy for Cyprus**

By a Decision the Council of Ministers the Digital Strategy for Cyprus Action Plan 2015-17 was approved. It includes nineteen (19) projects (€107 million), which are the most important priorities of the Digital Strategy for the period 2015-17, and aims to achieve the following:

- a. Modernization of Public Administration and provision of more public electronic services (e-government),
- b. Development of the digital entrepreneurship,
- c. Operation of e-health,
- d. Enhancing the e-education,
- e. Development of ultra-high speed broadband infrastructure (NGA networks),
- f. Computerization of local government,
- g. Enhance of digital literacy (e-skills), and,
- h. Increasing the broadband penetration.

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) of Cyprus as part of the "*Digital Strategy for Cyprus*" was initiated by the Department of Electronic Communications of the Ministry of Communications and Works in 2012. Cyprus' broadband targets are in line with the Digital Agenda for Europe (100 % coverage with 30 Mbps until 2020 and 50 % take-up rate for 100 Mbps). Cyprus' NBP is divided into 6 objectives. The first objective, "Connect Cyprus", includes five measures:

1. To promote a stable regulatory framework,
2. Licensing of wireless networks (e.g. avoidance of spectrum hoarding),
3. promote competition and decrease of broadband prices,
4. Establish fibre to the home networks (FTTH) and
5. Strengthen network and information security.

Besides the development of future-proof network infrastructure, the Cyprus strategy envisages to foster the digitisation of public services. Furthermore, an increase of digital literacy is planned as well as to promote the digital economy and to make use of ICT for the overall livelihood. The Cypriot strategy also aims at installing free WLAN access with fast internet connections in public places in rural and urban community Centres.

### **Transport and Mobility**

Data on passenger and cargo movements are regularly recorded at specific locations along the road network. Sustainable urban mobility plans are underway or are scheduled for all cities. A national transport plan shall be developed. Furthermore, intelligent transport systems are continually being deployed and expanded, thus improving access to information. The development of the Trans-European Transport Network, in accordance to the relevant EU Regulation is also a priority of the MTCW.

The MTCW in cooperation with four other academic institutions, in Cyprus and abroad, is proposing to set up a Transport Research Centre of Excellence. The proposal was submitted for the Horizon Teaming Call and was selected to proceed to stage 2, which is the development and submission of a business plan to set up the centre.

## Smart Specialization Strategy for Cyprus

Since 2015, the country's Smart Specialisation Strategy (Cyprus consists of a single region) is guiding the (officially unmodulated) Cyprus R&I strategy. It was developed jointly by the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development (the main body responsible for research policy implementation), the Research Promotion Foundation (main funding agency) and the Cyprus University of Technology, thus involving also research funders and performers. The strategy is fully compatible with the 2014-2020 Operational Programme for Competitive and Sustainable Growth, and will mainly be implemented through the 2016-2020 R&I framework programme "RESTART".

### Grant Schemes

A number of instruments have been put in place or are planned to support SMEs' investment in R&D. Among them is a grant programme by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism for co-funding R & I activities with a budget of €17m for 2015-2017 2020 (which exceeds current total annual business R&D expenditure).

Further initiatives –are planned for 2018 that will include Business Innovation Centres, providing advisory services to public and private businesses for the development of competitive products, creation of clusters in ICT, transport, viniculture and construction, and an Innovation Voucher system ("Innovation Packages") providing limited funding support (€5,000-€20,000) for enterprises, joint ventures, start-ups or collaborations with public research organizations in order to promote Innovation Culture or product certification. All direct funding instruments are to be co-financed by Structural Funds.

Current plans of the Cyprus government also include the development of a central, National Technology Transfer Office to support the major academic and research institutions and organize academic Technology Transfer activities at national level. The creation of a central TTO is expected to contribute significantly to developing effective linkages between industry and the research base and to sufficiently exploiting opportunities for developing next-generation industrial platforms based on state-of-the-art technology and scientific knowledge.

### Bilateral Cooperation

In addition and over the past years, Cyprus has developed bilateral cooperation in Research and Innovation with a number of developing countries (i.e. Egypt, Cuba, Russia, and China) and introduced several measures in order to enhance networking and collaboration of the Cypriot Research community with these countries. These relationships are usually based on bilateral governmental agreements concluded on science and technology cooperation. For the promotion of bilateral cooperation in the area of research and innovation (for both developed and developing countries) a budget of €1.6 mln through the Research Promotion Foundation is available for the period 2016-2020. The areas of concentration of the bilateral agreements are agreed between the two countries.

Cyprus is a member of internationally known Research organizations such as CERN and SESAME, in which member states or associate members are also developing countries. The participation of Cyprus in these organizations indicates its support in the spreading of scientific and technological excellence in the developing countries that participate in these organizations.

Cyprus also participates in the development of the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) which is set up to build research and innovation capacities and to develop knowledge and common innovative solutions for water management and agro-food systems in the Mediterranean basin. Member states of PRIMA are also countries of the Mediterranean basin which are considered as developing countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey. Through its participation in PRIMA, Cyprus supports the promotion of research and innovation capacities in these developing countries, contributing therefore to the achievement of the goal.

Furthermore, the Government supports the establishment of the Science and Technology Park as a basic infrastructure for the promotion of applied research, innovation and technology in Cyprus, as well as a tool for both the development of entrepreneurship and smart specialization

and the implementation of the national Digital Strategy. It is also expected that the Park will contribute considerably towards the diversification of the national economy and the transformation of Cyprus into a regional Centre for applied knowledge.

### **National Policy Statement for the Enhancement of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Cyprus**

National Policy Statement for the Enhancement of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem of the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, sets out some objectives to improve framework conditions for business R&I, among others reforming the corporate tax system, simplifying the regulation governing the creation of university spin-offs, strengthening intellectual property legislation, and using resources from Structural Funds in a more targeted manner guided by the smart specialisation strategy. On December 2 2016, the House of Representatives, in the framework of the Policy Statement for the enhancement of the Business Ecosystem, approved a revision of the Income Tax Law in order to improve incentives that foster investment in start-up and innovative companies in Cyprus. The revision entered into force on January 1, 2017.

Also, the Government is proceeding with the setting up of the legal framework to allow the Cypriot state universities to create spin offs and the regulatory framework for the efficient creation and operation of spin offs. This is a horizontal action and it relates also to other SGDs and Ministries for implementation.

### **Cyprus' New National Integrated Industrial Strategy**

Additional to the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism new National Integrated Industrial Strategy under way, emphasis will be placed on horizontal areas such as:

- Industrial Infrastructures and industrial innovation ecosystem components (through the integration of ICT, key enabling technologies (KETs), investment in R&D&I, upgrading of business and industrial models).
- Digital and Industrial Skills Enhancement.
- Improvement of Industry / Business Environment.
- Enhancement of Access to Finance.
- Facilitation of Access to Markets

These actions will be vertically implemented across priority industry sectors and in the creation of clusters.

### **Means of implementation**

#### **Additional Resources needed:**

Alternative ways of financing especially equity facilities, co-investment mechanisms, ex ante research on appropriate financial instruments are under processing for boosting infrastructures, industrialization and innovation. New loan products and facilities for industry and innovation are under consideration by financial organizations and intermediaries.

Government grant schemes are under revision for better targeting on needs, new grant schemes need to be developed in order to boost the main components of the SDG.

Studies needed for the creation of a business innovation platform through the interconnection of academia, industry, public sector and business.

Large-scale state infrastructure projects and PPPs are under consideration for the construction of digital infrastructures in Industrial Areas / Zones for the purposes of establishing cloud computing / Internet services, Internet of Things (IoT) , Industrial Internet, and Big Data Analytics in both urban and rural areas.

Grant schemes and other financial tools have to be established for the creation of skills and standards educational and professional programmes.

Expert opinions, research and services needed to implement the SDG.

## Next steps

- For policies already in place, continuation of the collaboration of relevant stakeholders and their efforts, better utilization of readily available financial, operational and other resources, and establishment of strategic synergies with external strategic partners from the EU and the world on knowledge and expertise.
- For policies under preparation i.e. the new national integrated industrial strategy, the strategic mix needs to be finalized, the investment mix to be established under one central industrial fund, and the promotional mix to be adjusted while taking into consideration all other policies at hand.

Results of the potential *ex ante* study for financial instruments will show the most appropriate financial instruments for Cyprus.

Also, studies for enhancing exports, tourism and electronic commerce have shown priority areas that will be the focus of Cyprus in implementing its overall strategies and policies for infrastructure, industrialization and innovation.

## Conclusion

Cyprus' industry slow but positive growth rate shows a stabilization of the overall industrial/business environment. Enhancement of digital and industrial skills, integration of key enabling technologies, investment in research, development and innovation and upgrading business and industrial models are means that can be utilized for the development of highly competitive, high value-added, innovative products and services that will contribute to the extroversion of Cypriot businesses and boost exports of our country.

In meeting SDG9 Cyprus is considering focusing on the following priority areas:

- Utilization of Industry 4.0 infrastructures and technologies.
- Industrial Skills Enhancement
- Improvement of Industry / Business Environment
- Enhancement of Access to Finance
- Facilitation of Access to Markets.



## SDG 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

The sustainability of towns and cities in Cyprus is ensured at the strategic level through the adoption of documents such as the Council of Europe's Guiding Principles for the Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent (Hannover, 2000) and the Charter on Sustainable European Cities (Leipzig, 2007), and the incorporation of their approach into the country's statutory urban development plans. The Reference Document on Integrated Urban Regeneration and its strategic potential for smarter, more sustainable and socially inclusive urban development (Toledo, 2010) has been used to a lesser extent to guide planning towards a more integrated and holistic approach. Moreover, urban development is now included in the National Sustainable Development Strategy. In this context, sustainable urban development is both a real challenge and a widely acknowledged necessity, which involves the timely identification and analysis of threats faced by urban areas, taking action to address the risks involved in the development process and, simultaneously, capitalizing on advantages and opportunities by taking into consideration the territorial impact of sector policies and achieving their coordination on the ground with the scope of sustainable, balanced and cohesive growth. Moreover, according to the National Plan "ZENON", specific national plans have been prepared covering possible natural disasters in the territory of the Republic of Cyprus.

### Urban settlements

There are two medium-sized urban agglomerations (Nicosia, Limassol) and two smaller ones (Larnaca, Paphos), centred around each of the island's four main municipalities. According to the



most recent available estimates of 2014, the four urban agglomerations concentrate roughly 70% of the country's total population. However, the island's short distances and good road network imply a much higher percentage of the population participates in the urban areas' economic activity and social life.

Up until 2009, the growth of urban areas in Cyprus had been sharply accelerated with the rapid growth of their population due to the influx of internally displaced persons in the aftermath of the 1974 Turkish invasion and the continuing military occupation of 36% of the territories of the Republic. In the effort for economic reactivation that followed, emphasis was placed in the tourism sector. Consequently, in the period after 1977, the diversification of the economy in favour of the tertiary sector, at the expense of the primary and secondary sectors, led to further intra-regional spatial inequalities by focusing growth in urban centers and coastal areas and the shrinkage of the rural agricultural hinterland.

The main historic centers of all four urban agglomerations, as well as smaller traditional cores of communities which have over time been incorporated into the agglomerations' urban fabric, face broad and complex challenges of degradation and socioeconomic lag, similar in nature, albeit more limited in scale, to those observed in inner cities elsewhere. Moreover, the aforementioned historic circumstances and inadequate spatial planning and development control mechanisms have enabled the rapid development of the 1980s to occur irregularly and incoherently in large parts of urbanizing areas, resulting in various challenges (incompatible uses, urban sprawl, lacking urban infrastructure, congestion, lacking public open spaces etc.) that the planning system now seeks to resolve through a complex mix of strategies, policies and measures.

As the complexity of revitalizing the urban economy calls for an integrated approach, policy in this area is oriented towards integrated interventions to be implemented in deprived urban neighbourhoods, focusing on degraded historic centers, so that these areas will be better placed to serve as poles of growth through the attraction of economic activities, research and education infrastructure and highly skilled human resources.

To address sprawl, urban development strategy includes policy incentives that encourage residential development within controlled boundaries and is implemented alongside policies to discourage dispersion in areas other than those designated, including the promotion of measures to activate idle urban land, such as the provision of incentives for this purpose, the implementation of public intervention planning projects for the completion of local road networks and legislative proposals to enable the implementation of urban land consolidation and the transfer of development rights. In addition, a series of environmental policy measures with spatial implications have also been promoted, including the full implementation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment directive, the preparation of guidelines against soil sealing practices, the characterization of the islands' landscapes, as well as the expansion of protected areas with parallel transfer of development rights for designated properties.

## **Transport**

Urban transport policy reflects EU policy on sustainable urban mobility, as documented in the "Roadmap to a Single Transport Area – Towards a Competitive and Resource-Efficient Transport System", "Towards a New Culture for Urban Mobility", "Action Plan on Urban Mobility" and "The Urban Mobility Package: Together Towards Competitive and Resource-Efficient Urban Mobility".

A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) for Nicosia, the nation's capital and largest agglomeration (Nicosia Integrated Mobility Master Plan) was developed in 2010 and similar strategic mobility plans are underway for the cities of Limassol and Larnaca. SUMPs are also planned for the remaining two city agglomerations (Pafos and Famagusta), while also a National Strategic Transport Plan and a review of the Nicosia SUMP are scheduled. These strategic plans include policies, measures and infrastructure projects to reduce car use and increase sustainable mobility, some of which have already been implemented or are scheduled for the near future. The Government of Cyprus aims to increase the share of trips made by public transport from 3%

to at least 10%, while also increasing the share of cycling to 3%. The development of SUMP's will follow the ELTIS guidelines on Developing and Implementing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan.

Additionally, conforming to the provisions of the National Action Plan for People with Disabilities, all open-space or road development/redevelopment schemes currently being designed or implemented are wheelchair (e.g. ramps) and visually impaired (tactile tiles) accessible and the new urban bus fleet is wheelchair accessible (low-floor and/or low-entry buses). Finally, geometric design urban planning standards that safeguard minimum sidewalk widths for wheelchair and visually impaired accessibility have been recently issued.

### **Housing**

In the aftermath of the 1974 Turkish invasion, the government set up a Service for the Displaced Persons to provide help and support to IDPs. The Service currently manages housing plans for IDPs and other vulnerable population groups, including persons with disabilities, families with three or more children, single-parent households and others, according to legislative provisions, providing support for the acquisition or construction of a housing unit, or rent subsidy. In addition, Development Plans include incentives, in the form of a density bonus, to encourage the development of affordable housing. The policy offers developers the right to build beyond the permissible density in exchange for including a certain number of affordable housing in residential developments.

### **Air quality**

According to the latest inventory submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), total emissions have been reducing by an average of 3% annually since 2008, primarily due to the financial situation and the impact of the promotion of renewable energy sources (RES). Energy remains the largest source of emissions, contributing 71% of their total, of which 54% is from the production of electricity and 32% from road transport. Consequently, from the point of view of mitigation, which is the primary focus of the national climate strategy, policies for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions include measures for the increased use of RES, the introduction of cleaner fuels, such as natural gas, increased energy efficiency in buildings, promotion of public transport and low emission vehicles, improvement of waste disposal and animal waste treatment. Moreover, the country has committed to reducing non-trading system emissions by 5% by 2020 through the EU Effort Sharing Regulation and, according to projections, as a result of such policy measures, it is anticipated that emissions in Cyprus will be reducing by 5% annually during the following years.

To keep track of air quality, a network of monitoring stations has been set up and is operated for the measurement of key pollutants, including ozone and particulate matter (PM), and related meteorological parameters. The assessment of these measurements shows an improvement of air quality and most key pollutants do not exceed allowable thresholds, with the exception of ozone and PM10. In the former instance, ozone excesses, observed mainly in non-urban areas, are primarily due to trans-boundary pollution and climate conditions prevailing in the Mediterranean Basin; whereas in the latter case, PM10 measurements exceed both the annual and daily limit values all over Cyprus and are due to a mix of anthropogenic and natural sources (sea salt) and trans-boundary pollution (Sahara dust storms).

The national action plan for the improvement of ambient air quality includes policies and measures to address the impact of air pollution from the transport sector, such as the introduction of intelligent transportation systems, the development of an integrated mobility master plan for the capital city, incentives for low-emission vehicles, the promotion of the use of bicycles, park and ride and central bus stations etc. Notably, as a result of legislative measures adopted with respect to automobile excise and circulation taxes, including incentives for the purchase of low emission and electric vehicles, Cyprus recorded the second largest annual CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions in newly registered cars within the EU (2013-2014), while the country holds the third largest CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions in newly registered cars since 2010.

### **Noise pollution**

In addition, Cyprus has developed strategic noise mapping for major roads exceeding 6 million vehicle passages per year, with relevant noise action plans prepared to reduce environmental noise in cases where limit values are exceeded. Mapping has been completed for the four main urban agglomerations of Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos, where the population exposure to different noise zones has been estimated. This information has been presented to the public in order to inform about environmental noise and its effects, as well as to draft action plans with the scope of preventing and protecting from environmental noise as well as ensuring noise environment levels are kept within acceptable values.

### **Waste Management**

Due to high consumption patterns Cyprus has one of the fastest rising waste generation rates in Europe with considerable environmental, health and socioeconomic impacts given the small size of the country. The reduction of waste generation rates and their appropriate management according to the waste hierarchy is therefore a priority. Over the period 1996-2011, the total amount of municipal waste generated increased by 45%, although more recent data show that the growth rate of residual waste has been reduced, due to the increase in separate collection (mainly involving packaging and WEEE) and energy recovery. According to legal requirements, government has prepared a waste management strategy, a waste management plan for municipal waste and a waste prevention program.

### **Citizen participation**

The planning system has been under continuous streamlining with a view to improving citizen participation and human rights in urban development. Recognizing that citizen involvement in the urban planning process contributes significantly both to the success of the process itself, as well as to the social acceptance of the final result through mutual trust and confidence building, at the same time averting the waste of investment funds that are particularly precious and limited in times of austerity, the broadest possible consensus and understanding of choices from the community is actively sought, not only for the success of local and regional initiatives, but also to create an attractive host environment that appeals to outside investors and economic actors. This participatory approach has been structured through a series of amendments of the urban planning legislation between 2007 and 2014, to include provisions on open calls for public consultation, structured public hearings on the basis of the results of the public consultation, as well as mandatory written consultation with the involved local authorities and all institutional stakeholders, during the statutory development plan preparation and amendment procedures. To further safeguard effective and wide participation, local authorities are strongly encouraged to conduct community hearings prior to submitting their positions during the consultation process.

An important milestone in the effort to improve technical capacity to plan and manage cities and improve public participation is the implementation of the HIPPODAMOS Project, an integrated information system. Through the full implementation of HIPPODAMOS the latest available technologies will be exploited for the electronic management of spatial planning and plan formulation, as well as plan implementation and development control processes, including exchange of information with the public and concerned stakeholders, including competent government departments, agencies, authorities and independent organizations, with appropriate online and database links.

### **Protection of cultural heritage**

Cyprus strongly supported the development of the new Convention of the Council of Europe on Offences relating to Cultural Property, which aims at protecting cultural property and preventing and combating cultural property crimes. The new international criminal law treaty: the Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property, was opened for signature at the 127<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Nicosia on 19 May 2017 and signed by Cyprus on the same day. It aims at protecting cultural property and preventing and combating cultural property crimes.

The treaty, the only one specifically dealing with the criminalization of illicit trafficking and destruction of cultural goods, fills a gap in international law, since none of the existing conventions deal with criminal law issues. The new convention also marks an important step in the Council of Europe's efforts to combat transnational organized crime and terrorist groups which are using the trade in blood antiquities as a source of income. While the Convention was designed to allow signature and ratification by both Council of Europe member States and non-member States, the wide definition of cultural property further broadens the scope of the Convention to help protect the cultural heritage of States that do not (or cannot) become Party to the Convention. Information on additional domestic and international action for the protection of cultural heritage in SDG 16.



## **SDG 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production**

The economic development, as has been traditionally understood, encourages the intensive and inefficient use of resources. SDG 12 reflects the overarching commitment of governments to contribute to changing the current unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, through enhanced resource efficiency, the promotion of sustainable models of consumption and production, and the transformation towards a green, circular economy. In this respect, Cyprus closely follows and implements the relevant policies and legislative framework of the European Union while more action is taken through the Green Economy Action Plan in place.

### **I. Green Economy Action Plan**

One of Cyprus's primary objectives today is the move towards a more competitive, resource efficient, low-carbon green economy that will sustain growth, create new financial opportunities, improve productivity, boost competitiveness and create new green jobs as an answer to the rising unemployment patterns. One of the key objectives is to increase income and employment through the mobilization of public and private investments in greener technologies and products that will contribute to increased energy, material and resource efficiency in production processes and services. Through policies measures and specific actions designed to meet the national greenhouse gas emissions, waste reduction and recycling targets and increase in energy and resource efficiency, Cyprus implements and supports the transition towards a more resource efficient, low carbon, circular economy. This transition relies on the appropriate combination of regulatory measures, economic market instruments and voluntary tools, educational and capacity building programmes, awareness campaigns as well as other initiatives and incentives. Cyprus also targets production and consumption patterns and the provision of services through the active promotion of voluntary environmental tools and product labeling schemes, coupled with an enhanced green public procurement, as a means of boosting the market for green products and services.

In this respect, specific actions include the promotion of voluntary systems of sustainable production and consumption through the implementation of the European Ecolabel and the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), as well as the Green Public Procurement Action (GPPA) Plan.

At the same time, the economic conditions of the past few years have highlighted that Cyprus requires more than ever before, innovative measures and policies to support growth, production and the provision of services. Those measures and policies should include improvements in efficiencies, the reduction of waste and pollution and the safeguarding of our natural capital and ecosystem services. Given the wider policy context and current circumstances, Cyprus has finalized its **National Action Plan for a Green Economy** as one of the key tools towards resource efficiency, sustainable consumption and production patterns and more sustainable growth.

The Plan, which aims to exploit and enhance synergies between the environmental and other economic sectors, includes measures in all key sectors, such as agriculture, water resources, biodiversity and green infrastructure, forests, energy, transport, industry, waste management, tourism, climate change and adaptation. Its key parameters include investments in key natural

resources; the provision of incentives to increase resource efficiency and enhance productivity; the promotion of market-based tools coupled with regulatory instruments to drive investments in new processes and technologies to create opportunities for innovation and to boost the market for green products and services and improved governance through a more integrated and coherent policy framework.

Significant progress has already been achieved in some sectors with respect to the integration of environmental considerations. In the tourism sector, important steps have been taken towards a more sustainable tourism product. Active campaigns have been organised for the promotion of certification instruments, and specifically the Ecolabel, the EMAS and the Green Key, with an increasing number of hotel establishments becoming certified, led by the public sector in cooperation with private initiatives from NGOs and tour operators.

## **II. Tourism**

In view of the rising demand for greener tourism, the Cyprus Tourism Organization has introduced sustainability standards as part of the quality standards that must be complied with by hotel establishments. Recognizing the importance of sustainable tourism, Cyprus has already initiated a number of policies, activities and tools towards this end. Within the framework of the tourism strategies and the tourism sustainable development policies implemented in Cyprus, the relevant strategic priorities and initiatives include:

- Development of targeted alternative forms of tourism (special interest products/markets) which have proven their contribution to the three pillars of sustainable development, such as cultural, religious, rural, nature/walking/trekking, gastronomy, sports (including sports training and organization of events, cycling, diving, golf) and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) tourism:
- Mitigation of the seasonality problem and development of a more balanced annual tourism arrival pattern
- Improvement of the occupancy and economic performance of hotel investments
- Improvement of service quality in the tourism related establishments.
- Promoting our local gastronomy and Cyprus grape spirits,
- Ultimate strategic targets have been established concerning tourist arrivals, tourism revenue, occupancy rates of the accommodation sector, seasonality pattern of arrivals, market diversification.
- Simple targets concern special interest products, assessable tourism for all, beaches, etc.

Cyprus also implements European Union programs, such as Upgrading the Tourism Product for the Tourist Season Lengthening, including a program of cooperation with the Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative for the development and implementation of:

- The pilot program about the Green Beaches
- The framework of sustainable criteria in the hotel industry.
- The “Waste Mapping” handbook
- The Cyprus Breakfast program

## **III. Circular Economy and Waste Management**

Until recently, the lack of an integrated and coherent approach meant that only 20% of municipal waste was prepared for recycling, while the rest was disposed of in landfills. The fact that Cyprus still has one of the highest per capita production of municipal waste in Europe, highlights the need to restructure policy, so as to reduce the overall impact of resource use and improve its efficiency. The new government policy on waste has been shaped accordingly to respond to this challenge. In 2015, the Municipal Waste Management Plan and the National Waste Prevention Programme were adopted, covering the period 2015 – 2021. Both instruments form a comprehensive, integrated 6-year management strategy on municipal waste. Their overarching objective is the decoupling of economic development from the environmental impacts



associated with the production and disposal of waste, which is to be accomplished by minimizing the per capita production of municipal waste in Cyprus and by promoting the sustainable management of waste through the implementation of the waste hierarchy.

Specifically, the measures and actions covered by the Plan include regulatory measures (obligation for local authorities to establish separate collection, adoption of producer responsibility for products, landfill tax/levy, a landfill ban for specific waste streams), the provision of appropriate waste infrastructure by the state (construction of mix municipal waste management plants and landfill, development of a green-points network and the reclamation of landfills), raising the awareness of the public (awareness raising campaigns, forums and access to information and data), education programmes for local authorities and stakeholders, and the provision of economic incentives (subsidies, awards). The basic objectives of the Plan are to achieve a 50% recycling at least for paper, plastic, metal and glass, 15% in the separate collection of the organic content of municipal waste, and a 20% reduction in landfill.

In 2017, three other Waste Management Plans were adopted for waste tires, used oils and other waste streams. All plans and programmes have a six-year duration, are based on the strict implementation of the waste management hierarchy, set national targets and define the role of stakeholders. The targets will be achieved through a review of the institutional framework, the strengthening of local authorities, improvements in infrastructure, the provision of incentives, the implementation of the extended producer responsibility and the full exploitation of mechanisms for raising public awareness and educating stakeholders. Actions and measures focus on improving legislation, strengthening existing infrastructure, public awareness, the training of decision makers, and the provision of financial incentives for local authorities and the private sector.



### **SDG 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

The Paris Agreement has set a firm foundation for the transition to a low-carbon society, resilient to climate change and thus contributing to a future with more security, health and prosperity for all citizens. The Agreement defined a long-term objective of maintaining global warming at levels well below 2 ° Celsius and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Therefore, global emissions should peak as soon as possible and then decline rapidly in order to achieve a balance between emissions and sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of the century. The Agreement also notes the importance of adaptation actions by setting long-term objectives for adaptation in order to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability globally.

At the core of the Agreement is a legally binding provision that each Party must prepare, communicate and maintain the most ambitious emissions reductions possible, the so-called "*Nationally Determined Contributions*" that will represent progression over time. Furthermore, in order to achieve the objectives of such national contributions, the Parties will implement domestic measures.

The European Union and its Member States have already communicated their nationally determined contributions as their commitment to jointly achieve a binding target of reduction of domestic greenhouse gas emissions of 40% by 2030 for the overall economy compared to 1990, as defined in 2014 European Council Conclusions on the 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework.

As regards Cyprus, based on the relevant allocation criteria, the national target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is expected to be around 24% from 2005 levels. It is estimated that in order to achieve this new goal, changes will be required mainly in the sector of energy with the penetration of cleaner fuels such as natural gas, the promotion of appropriate policies and measures to further save energy and the penetration of renewable energy sources.

Additionally, the reduction of emissions in the transport sector constitutes an important challenge. Currently, the sector accounts for about 25% of all emissions in Cyprus. At the same

time, the relevant policies and measures from other sectors, such as agriculture, industry, land use and forestry and waste management need to be reviewed.

Cyprus is optimistic that by developing and implementing the appropriate policies and measures that have already been decided, will achieve its goal. The aim is to simultaneously decrease its dependency on fossil fuels imports, enhance its competitiveness, create new jobs and transit to a low carbon economy. In parallel, through the new climate and energy framework of the European Union, appropriate financial tools can be utilized, which will support the implementation of relevant policies and measures.

Meanwhile, Cyprus implements sound policies and measures that combine economic growth and environmental protection Cyprus applies policies incorporated horizontally into economic activities. In particular, coherent plans have been established and are implemented regarding:

- Greenhouse gas emission reduction and adaptation;
- Effective liquid and solid waste management;
- Protection of water resources;
- Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity;
- Enhancement of resource efficiency;
- Transition towards green economy and green labor market and
- Integration of environmental dimension into developing activities.

Additionally, Cyprus has included “clean and green energy” in its energy balance. “Green economy” is promoted through appropriate schemes in order to encourage the use of renewable energy sources and energy savings and the proper management of all waste streams. In order to implement Cyprus’ international and European obligations, the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (Department of the Environment) has undertaken the coordination of efforts to develop a National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change. In this framework, the observed climate change was recorded and its impact assessed; future climate change and its impact were estimated and proposed adaptation actions recorded; a specific study was done to assess the categorization of risks from climate change, in conjunction with the results of the Life + CYPADAPT Program; a public consultation and individual consultations with all stakeholders was organized.

Following this procedure, the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation was formulated and approved by the Ministerial Council. The Strategy aims at enhancing the adaptability of Cyprus on observed and projected climate change, and effectively preventing and addressing the negative impacts of climate change. A relevant Action Plan has been prepared for the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, which includes a series of medium-term actions expected to be implemented by various Ministries / Departments / Services.



## **SDG 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

The Republic of Cyprus is indissolubly linked to marine life, since as an island state it is affected by the adverse effects of the misuse of marine resources. It therefore seeks to enhance its efforts aiming to maximize the protection and sustainability of the Mediterranean, by combining them with EU efforts. The national priorities and targets set for Cyprus with regard to SDG 14 are based on objectives set by the EU legislation and regional and international conventions. While the general framework of the Barcelona Convention is very important at the regional level, the

main European directives which advocate the implementation of policies on SDG 14 are:

- The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD, 2008/56/EC) (which is perhaps the most directly linked policy in regards to the overall aim of SDG14).
- Measures for the protection of the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and other obligations arising from regional and international conventions are applied implemented. (Implementation of monitoring programs for the conservation of priority species and habitats (e.g. *Carreta carreta*, *Chelonian mydas*, *Monachus monachus*, *P.oceanica meadows*).
- The EU Water Framework Directive (2008/105/EC), through which four biological quality elements: (i) Benthic macro invertebrates, (ii) Macroalgae, (iii) Phytoplankton / Chlorophyll-a and (iv) *Posidonia oceanica*, are investigated in a number of representative sampling stations in coastal waters.
- The Nitrates Directive (91/676 / EEC), based on which the coastal waters of the Kokkinohoria area, which are considered vulnerable to eutrophication due to agricultural nitrates inputs, are monitored.
- The Priority Substances Directive (2013/39 /EC), by which a large number of pollutants referred to in that Directive are analyzed in Cypriot marine waters of Cyprus.
- The Directive 2010/75/EU for industrial emissions was transposed into national legislation with the Industrial Emissions Law.
- The Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) has been harmonized in the National Legislation.
- The framework of the Barcelona Convention while the European Aquis provides for the establishment of marine *Natura* 2000 protected sites.
- The EU IAS regulation (EC) No 1606/2002.

As mentioned above, at regional level, Cyprus is an active member of the Barcelona Convention. Apart from having ratified and implementing most of its protocols, over the last three years Cyprus has taken various initiatives of cooperation with its neighbors, for the adoption of contingency plans for combating marine pollution among others. The protection of the Mediterranean Sea from land based sources and activities, makes reference to the following actions/measures/programs:

- Implementation of the National Waste Prevention Program and the Waste Management Plans.
- Controlling all the discharges to the sea from land based sources by implementing the Industrial Emission Directive as well as the national legislature and specifically the “Water and Soil Pollution Control Law of 2002”.
- Minimization of nutrient loading to waters through the implementation of national code of good agricultural practices. Most of the coastal aquifers are over abstracted and consequently there is sea intrusion resulting in no nutrient loading to the sea from the aquifers. Small quantities of nutrients end up in the sea via runoff.
- Regarding marine litter from rivers, in Cyprus almost all flowing rivers end up in dams and therefore litter is not reaching the sea.

Cyprus participated at the UN Oceans Conference in June 2017, which focused on the implementation of SDG 14 and it committed to fully support the ongoing efforts for the

development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

At the Conference, Cyprus has also made the following national commitments for the protection of the Mediterranean basin:

- Considering the disastrous consequences of a hydrocarbon marine pollution incident, regional cooperation based on solid and well defined procedures is absolutely essential for effectively combating such occurrences. Based on this necessity and the increase of hydrocarbon exploration activities in Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus, Greece and Israel, through a trilateral agreement decided to formulate a Sub regional Contingency Plan for preparedness and response to major hydrocarbon marine pollution incidents covering the areas of responsibility. The preparation of the Sub-regional Contingency Plan (SCP) is funded by the UN Environment /Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) system with the technical support of REMPEC and is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.
- To continue if its efforts to eliminate all treated and untreated wastewater discharges in the sea, reducing therefore the risks of eutrophication and its negative effects.

To conclude, the implementation of EU Acquis and other regional and international recommendations in relation to the marine environment is among the priorities set by the Cypriot Government, while regional cooperation is considered essential and actively promoted. Cyprus is committed to make the best use of the available tools to conserve the oceans by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.



## **SDG 15. By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development**

In Cyprus, national Law 4 (III)/1996 ratified the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) along with national laws N. 153/ (I)/2003 and 152(I)/2003, ratifying the Habitats and Birds Directives, form the cornerstone of the conservation of habitats and wildlife. Law N. 152 (I) / 2003 for the Protection and Management of the Wild Birds and Game Species provides protection and conservation of all wild birds, game species and the Cyprus mouflon by protecting and managing their habitats and employing measures for the sustainable use of all game species. In addition, the Republic of Cyprus has adopted a National Action Plan (2016-2020) for tackling the illegal killing of wild birds. The national legislation comprises the principal for the protection of habitats and wildlife. Under the provisions of Nature Directives, Cyprus designated 40 Sites of Community Interest (SCIs of which 25 are SAC) and 30 Special Protected Areas (SPAs) in order to safeguard and restore threatened habitats and species and protect ecosystems. The percentage of terrestrial key biodiversity areas covered by protected areas is up to 28% per cent of the area under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus or about 17% of the whole island. Mountain ecosystems consist of high biodiversity and political will should increase in order to meet the SDG and targets. Protected areas in Cyprus consist mainly of mountain and freshwater ecosystems (about 80% is forest land and freshwater ecosystems).

The EU's Natura 2000 network ensures conservation of biodiversity in those areas as well as outside the network. Programmes such as LIFE were implemented in mountain ecosystems (e.g. Troodos National Forest Park), where concrete measures and actions were achieved for habitats restoration (e.g. *Pinus nigra*) and species conservation (e.g. *Pinguicula crystallina*). Action plans are planned for protected areas (habitats and species) in order to ensure long term conservation of mountain ecosystems and their biodiversity. Measures implemented for conservation and restoration of habitats and species, ensure good structure and function of ecosystems, and enhance their capacity to provide benefits and services.

The designated areas are representative of the mountain, coastal, wetlands, rivers and grasslands and cover natural habitats and species. Protected areas and particularly their Management Plans are aimed to be integrated in other policy areas (Common Agriculture Policy, Water Framework Directive, Forest Policy and Strategy, and in the Town and Planning Policy), which impact biodiversity, in order to ensure protection and restoration of mountain ecosystems (habitats and species), and enhance conservation. Cyprus has prepared a National Biodiversity Strategy which includes actions and measures for all ecosystems (forest, freshwater, grassland etc.), as well as the implementation of above targets which foresees conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the mountain and freshwater ecosystems and their services.

The basic principles for forest management in Cyprus, according to the National Forest Policy, are: sustainability, multiple-use forestry, holistic management of forest ecosystems, and a participatory process in decision making. The political and legal framework for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forests at national level, consists of the following documents/commitments: a) National Forest Policy, b) National Forest Law, c), the Strategic Planning for the Department of Forests for 2017-2019. In addition, the relevant international framework, adopted in Cyprus consists of: i) the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, ii) the EU Forest Strategy, EU Timber Regulation and EU FLEGT Action Plan, iii) the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Declarations and Resolutions. Other relevant international commitments are also implied, like CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, ITTA, etc.

The Forest Policy focuses on sustainable management of forests, through a system of multiple use of conservation of the biodiversity and upgrading and promoting as well as utilization of all functions of forest ecosystems. Measures for forest ecosystems are: afforestation and woodland creation; prevention of forest fires, repairing burnt areas; Investments that improve durability and environmental value of forest ecosystems; Investments to improve the value of forests as public goods; and Actions and projects for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in forests. Forests are managed and used efficiently in a way that preserves their natural qualities (biodiversity). In Cyprus, forests are maintained and managed mainly for their biodiversity and ecosystem services. Mountain ecosystems provide various valuable services on which human well-being depends, such as food, water, energy, primary production, cultural services etc. Natura 2000 Network includes protected mountain ecosystems and implementation of measures such as conservation and restoration of habitats and species are enforced according to their ecological needs. Mountain and freshwater ecosystems are regularly monitored, however further financing support and human resources are needed for enhancing the conservation and restoration of those ecosystems.

In Cyprus, actions are taken for restoration where forest is degraded (e.g. afforestation in old mines) and where there are burnt areas. Through the Rural Development Plan (RDP) there are measures for afforestation of agricultural land, protection of forests from fires and natural disasters, reforestation of burnt areas, afforestation of non-agricultural land and investment for maintaining and improvement of the economic, ecological and social role of forests.

Cyprus prepared a National Action Plan (NAP) and Programme of Measures for Combating Desertification. NAP includes identification of environmentally sensitive areas threatened; evaluation of current policies and measures; sustainable land use and water resources management; concrete and practical measures necessary for the prevention and combating desertification; mitigation of the effects of drought and land degradation; and awareness and consultation campaigns with stakeholders. Measures are implemented through the Rural Development Plan such as subsidies for farmers in overgrazed areas, restoration of drystone walls, water aquifer restoration, afforestation of burnt areas, etc., however NAP for Desertification should be implemented via Ministerial Decree. In order to work through the mentioned targets of SDG, Cyprus prepared a Prioritization Action Framework (PAFs) for the Natura 2000 areas, which includes actions and measures to protect, conserve and use sustainably all ecosystems. Cyprus proceeded with the completion of terrestrial Natura 2000 network designating additional forest land as Sites of Community Interest (SCIs).

Cyprus signed the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing of genetic resources, but there is no a legislative regime yet. It has been identified and agreed upon, on national level, which it is



of great interest to Cyprus to regulate access to genetic resources given the high biodiversity (high level of endemism). Key challenges include the lack of expertise and knowledge on such a complex issue, necessary for the design and implementation of a legislative framework, in line with the Nagoya protocol. Nevertheless, a national legislation has been prepared (not yet in effect) to apply the second pillar of the protocol (user compliance) to implement the EU ABS Regulation. Currently, access to genetic resources in Cyprus is open, with the exception of species that are included in the Habitats Directive or species that are on forest land, for which a special permit is required by the competent authorities. A legislative framework on access & benefit sharing is envisaged to be adopted by 2020, along with ratification of the Nagoya Protocol. The compliance of users of genetic resources in Cyprus will be monitored via the Regulation and the relevant national law, although it is predicted that not many industries in Cyprus are affected by the utilization of genetic resources in the context of the Nagoya Protocol/ ABS Regulation.

Invasive Alien Species are regulated through the respective of EU IAS regulation. Focus will be on the creation of procedures within measures (e.g. role of different competent authorities, permit system, inspections, and penalties). Challenges include the limited expertise and scientific research on IAS at national level. Cyprus is preparing a national framework to address invasive alien species through a dedicated legislation, which will implement the EU IAS regulation. Specific measures against IAS are already in place by competent authorities for management of the most invasive species, such as *Acacia saligna* and *Ailanthus altissima* on terrestrial ecosystems. Difficulties include both limited expertise and research based data, as well as low public awareness/ education on the issue. However, through the IAS Regulation and the IAS national legislation, a more coordinated and integrated approach will be undertaken towards prevention and management where needed, with specific funds and structures allocated for this purpose.

European Commission adopted an EU Action Plan to tackle wildlife trafficking within the EU and to strengthen the EU's role in the global fight against these illegal activities. This Action Plan along with National Nature Law (N. 152 (I) / 2003 and N. 153 (I) / 2003) are enforced in order to protect wildlife fauna species in Cyprus. Rangers, game wardens and police force agents increased their inspections and their patrolling in areas in order to suppress damage and destruction of wildlife along the island. There is increased awareness on combating poaching, trapping and trafficking of protected species. Competent authorities have intensified their campaigns and surveillance where the phenomenon of poaching, trapping and trafficking occurs. For the purpose of combating illegal taking of wild birds the Republic of Cyprus has endorsed an Action Plan to tackle illegal killing of birds (2016-2020).

Ecosystems and their biodiversity values (Management plans of protected areas) are integrated into national and local planning law and other strategies and policies, in order to promote awareness about ecosystem and biodiversity values and their services. Financial resources for the protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss, include national funds, LIFE and Structural funds, RDP (LEADER). No ODA for forest or forestry purposes is currently provided for developing countries by Cyprus.

Measures for freshwater ecosystems are: reconstitution and restoration of wetlands areas; removing of horizontal barriers for improving the hydromorphological characteristics on selected river ecosystems that support important ecological characteristics; cleaning/rearranging active riverbed to improve the hydromorphological characteristics of selected water ecosystems that support important ecological characteristics; afforestation with native species for improving the hydromorphological characteristics of selected water ecosystems that support important ecological characteristics; removal of alien/invasive plant species from selected areas in order to improve important ecological characteristics; ecological restoration of riverbanks in selected Heavily Modified Water Bodies; local enforcement in the riverbed of selected water ecosystems (e.g. local dredging) to improve the hydromorphological characteristics that support important biological characteristics; creation of fish corridors in specific small transverse river terraces for the improvement of living conditions of selected species of fish; monitoring programme for the effectiveness of ecological flow underneath dams.

Indicators are the forest area as a proportion of total land area, the progress towards sustainable forest management, and the percentage of protected areas. Total protected designated as SCIs (Forest land 10, 13%) as a percentage of the total terrestrial land is 13, 49. Forests constitute the 18, 75% of total land area is where forests total and other wooded land as a percentage of total land area are 41, 91% (Reference Year: 2015. Source: Cyprus Report for CFRQ - FRA 2015<sup>2</sup>. Progress at national level is monitored through the National Set of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, and the Annual Report of the Department of Forests reformed to coincide with the national set of C&I. In addition, progress is reported to FAO Global FRA Programme and the FOREST EUROPE State of Europe's Forests. The most recent Reports were submitted in 2015. For Sustainable Forest Management in Cyprus assessment of the European Criteria and Indicators has been made. The goal of the Indicators was evaluated and measures the forest condition, and to evaluate sustainable management of the forest as an entire ecosystem and monitor changes over time (e.g. deposition of air pollutants, defoliation and forest damage). Regarding maintenance conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems an Indicator of tree species composition, regeneration, naturalness, deadwood, genetic resources, landscape patterns, threatened forest species, protected forest species, and introduce tree species was assessed.

The implementation of SDG 15, as described above, includes the establishment of protected areas, nature reserves and National Forest Parks and integration in sectorial and cross-sectorial programmes and planning mechanisms for the conservation of the ecosystems and their biodiversity. An efficient implementation of the SDG needs financing support and the development of capacity building in order to mobilize resources. This process could be available via capabilities for e-learning platforms (scientific level); implementation of training programs; exchange knowledge on management and innovative technology; enhancing awareness and dissemination; human resources and information technology within and across the national system; capacity of development needs including data and statistics knowledge-sharing, technology and partnerships and the development of criteria and mechanisms to set priorities for the mobilization of resources.

Measures towards conservation of mountain and freshwater ecosystems including their biodiversity, are implemented via the protected areas of the Natura 2000 network, the related Convention (e.g. CBD), Policies and Strategies. In order to ensure good conservation status and to enhance their capacity to provide benefits and services that are essential for sustainable development the following steps are planned: enhance further implementation and integration of the SDG; establish Green Infrastructure for habitats conservation and restoration of species; enhance local and regional involvement and stakeholders participation; create green jobs; promote biodiversity value and ecosystem services; improve political commitment and leadership; Integrate biodiversity in all sectors; improve monitoring and report progress towards SDG; ensure financial support;

The SDG 15 provides a vision for achieving biodiversity objectives (conservation, sustainability and ABS), the sustainable development that can be delivered with the active participation of government, local communities, private sector and stakeholders. Targets focus on specifically managing sustainably mountain and freshwater ecosystems, restoring degraded lands and successfully combating desertification, reducing degraded natural habitats, eliminating illegal taking of species, and ending biodiversity loss. To safeguard mountain ecosystems that contribute significantly to global biodiversity, protected areas network have been established and identified as key biodiversity areas.



## **SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

<sup>2</sup> Available at: (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-az195e.pdf>).

On promoting peaceful societies, the primary concern of the government of the Republic of Cyprus is no other than ending the Turkish illegal military occupation of approximately 37% of its territory and all the consequences of the island's subsequent forceful division. A series of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as resolutions adopted by numerous other international organizations, reflect the universal condemnation of Turkey's 1974 invasion and all subsequent acts of aggression against Cyprus. The resolutions demand, amongst other, the withdrawal of foreign troops, the return of refugees to their homes in safety and the ascertainment of the fate of the missing persons. Moreover, they call for the respect of the human rights of all Cypriots as well as for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus. The European Court of Human Rights, in its judgment against Turkey on 12 May 2014, has found the government of Turkey responsible for gross and systematic violations of human rights in Cyprus.

The President of the Republic's top priority and aspiration is to achieve a fair and viable comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem that will reunite the country and its people in a modern, functional, European state, safeguarding the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all Cypriots and addressing all their security concerns. Towards this goal, the President participates in ongoing negotiations, under the auspices of the UN Secretary General's Good Offices Mission, aiming at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. The aim is for Cyprus to become a homeland of peaceful co-existence and prosperous collaboration between all of its citizens, to the benefit of the younger generations, as well as a shining example of the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic cooperation.

### **Combating all forms of violence**

Due to its geographical proximity with the Middle East and due to the recent terrorist incidents in EU territory, Cyprus remains vigilant to a growing terrorist threat. The Government has included the fight against terrorism in its priorities and is committed to join forces with other governments, bilaterally and multilaterally, to eliminate this scourge in all its forms and manifestations. For that purpose, a national strategy on countering terrorism was adopted in 2014 with priorities set out for the prevention of radicalization and **violent extremism** and actions that include training, increase of international cooperation, response to root causes, establishment of intercultural dialogue, countering racism, xenophobia and extremist behavior, building public awareness and countering radicalization online.

The crime rate in Cyprus is one of the lowest in the world, according to International Crime Statistics. In 2016, the Cyprus Police handled 5094 cases of Serious Crime, most of which were related to thefts, burglaries and other crimes against property. Organized crime groups are limited and their activity focuses mainly in the areas of drug offences, property crime, extortion and racketeering and arson. In the occupied part of the island, where the Republic of Cyprus cannot exercise effective control, organized crime groups are mainly active in human trafficking and illegal immigration.

Promoting the rule of law and administration of justice in an increasingly open international context, require strengthening cooperation with other countries and international organizations in both civil and criminal law. The Ministry of Justice's International Legal Cooperation Unit works for the establishment of bilateral agreements on legal/judicial cooperation and promoting the accession of Cyprus in multilateral international conventions as well as implementing bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Cyprus has ratified the United Nations Convention on International Organized Crime and its Protocols, while additional legislation is already in place on Prevention and Combating Human Trafficking, Exploitation of Persons and Victims Protection International Cooperation in Criminal Matters etc. Since 2010, the Cyprus Police investigated 24 cases with elements of international organized crime, most of which related to offences of illegal immigration and human trafficking.

Moreover, European and international regulations concerning illicit arms trafficking are already being implemented and, since 2016, all weapons found or seized in Cyprus are registered in Interpol's Arms system. Domestically, the Police cooperate with other departments and services to withdraw firearms licenses from persons who are violent and dangerous, while additional firearms safety measures include licensing of handgun purchasers, background check

requirements for all gun sales and close oversight of retail gun sellers to reduce the diversion of guns to criminals.

With regard to Economic Crime, the Police investigate serious and complex economic affairs and contribute to reducing illicit cash flows and strengthening the recovery and return of assets through cooperation with MOKAS, a service responsible for Policy issues regarding measures to combat money laundering, also designated by the Council of Ministers as an Asset Recovery Agency. The Police places great emphasis on the area of cooperation, especially in the area of Information Exchange and Exchange of Best Practices.

In order to effectively combat Serious and Organized Crime in Cyprus, the Cyprus Police often works with Civil Society (non-governmental Organizations and Private Organizations), reinforcing, in this way, the effective detection, investigation, prevention and criminal prosecution of Serious, Organized and International Organized Crime.

### **Illicit trafficking and destruction of cultural goods**

Cyprus has extensive activity in the field of protection of cultural property at domestic and also at international level, as described in SDG 11, and also promotes cooperation between law enforcement agencies and organizations in combating illicit trafficking and destruction of cultural goods. Upon initiative of the Cyprus Police, an informal network of Law Enforcement Authorities and Expertise in the Field of Cultural Goods was set up in 2012, aiming at to tackling the illicit trafficking of cultural goods at a national and European level.

The Cyprus Police has established a special Office of Cultural Heritage whose principal objective is the repatriation and return to their lawful owners of historical and cultural items destroyed or looted due to the Turkish invasion and occupation of the island and illicitly trafficked to other countries. The Office cooperates with governmental and nongovernmental organizations such as the Antiquities Department, the Customs Department, the Law Office, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Church of Cyprus, etc. Moreover, at a European and International level, there is cooperation with other Law Enforcement Agencies and Organizations, like Europol, Interpol, CEPOL, USA authorities and others.

### **Trafficking in Human Beings**

Cyprus is a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. The Government of Cyprus fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and prohibits all forms of trafficking through relevant legislation adopted in 2014, with penalties sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes. A national referral mechanism outlining procedures for victim identification and referral to government services has been approved, while the number of personnel in the Police anti-trafficking unit has been increased and the unit's authority expanded, making it the lead for all potential trafficking investigations throughout the country. Among others, the unit effectuates specialized and systematic training that include an overall awareness of the frontline officers on trafficking issues, the evolving trends, how to deal with potential victims and persons found during police operations, identification techniques, handling of victims, etc.

Efforts have also been increased to protect victims in cooperation with the social welfare office and anti-trafficking training or guidance has been provided for the diplomatic personnel. Moreover, a Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group to combat trafficking has been established, in order to coordinate the implementation of the 2013-2015 National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan.

### **National Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2019**

The Republic of Cyprus has made a strong commitment to take all necessary measures and actions towards the protection of children against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It ratified the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Convention in 2014 and introduced a national law (the Prevention and Combating against Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child

Pornography Law of 2014). A milestone of this effort has been the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee, approved by the Council of Ministers in July 2015, for the development of a National Strategy for the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation against Children. The National Strategy is already being implemented, its stated purpose being to provide an environment for children where they can be protected from violence in the form of sexual abuse and exploitation. Governmental and non-governmental organizations have come together for the creation and implementation of the National Strategy and a multi-disciplinary approach is being promoted.

Combating sexual violence against children was chosen as a first step, aiming at having the right infrastructure and training in place and then using these principles to build on for combating all other forms of violence against children. Provisions are included for the creation and operation, within 2017, of a Children's House, where cases of sexual abuse and/or exploitation of a child will be handled by a multidisciplinary group of experts, aiming at safeguarding access of the child to all of his/her rights on the principle of the best interest of the child. In addition, the National Strategy includes provisions for the creation of a Committee for monitoring its implementation, called the "Voice". The Committee will make the voice of children heard and give back to the victims their voice in order to overcome the dreadful consequences of abuse.

## **Justice**

Consolidation of public life, protecting and enhancing democratic institutions, promoting transparency and fighting corruption are included in Cyprus' priorities for which legislative work is promoted. Moreover, monitoring and modernizing legislation concerning the smooth administration of justice is one of the objectives of the competent Ministry, which seeks close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders for designing new legislation. A study on the preparation and formulation of policies and legislation, including strengthening the legislative framework to combat corruption, is also being realized. In the framework of its activity towards the protection of the rights of all citizens, Cyprus implements relevant national and European legislation that promotes respect for and protection of human rights.

A comprehensive and thorough revision of the penal legislation is underway, as well as measures towards improvement and reform of the penitentiary system, which includes revisions of the work plans of prison staff and of buildings and technology of the Prisons Department. One of the priorities competent Ministry, has been the improvement of detention and living conditions of prisoners on the basis of the principles of international human rights law, respect for human dignity and equal treatment without any distinction. A prison design and monitoring procedure was put in place, gaps and weaknesses were identified with a purpose to define clear and transparent procedures taking into consideration the rights of prisoners and staff in order to act in accordance with the principles of legality and proportionality. Progress includes the ongoing development of the process of new entrants which did not exist until recently, the implementation of the new evaluation procedure of all new entrants to the prevention of self-harm and suicide attempts.

During the past few years, Cyprus Police have made efforts to enhance and reinforce combating of all forms of discrimination, as well as to promote awareness on diversity and multiculturalism. In accordance with relevant policy established in 2013, training curricula have been revised and special courses on legislation and policy on combating racist violence, xenophobia and discrimination were introduced. Moreover, a Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights was signed between the Cypriot police and Non-Governmental Organizations, to further improve and develop closer cooperation between the Contracting Parties for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Office for Combating Discrimination is responsible for the implementation of preventive measures as well as for monitoring intervention tactics to combat racism, discrimination and xenophobia within police procedure. A Human Rights Office for detainees is also in place, for the protection of their rights. Its activities include training of officers, preparation of relevant circulars and guiding manuals in the field of handling detainees and the operation of police detention centers as well as improvement of living conditions in detention facilities, in cooperation with the relevant Departments involved.



## SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Cyprus had been severely affected by the global financial and banking sector crisis which erupted in 2008, and had experienced a prolonged period of economic contraction. As outcome result, Cyprus had to implement a set of fiscal consolidation reforms aimed to overcome short and medium-term financial, fiscal and structural challenges. For this purpose, in 2013 the Republic of Cyprus signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality (MoU) with EC/ECB/IMF and had to go through a macroeconomic Economic Adjustment Program whose key objectives were (i) to restore the soundness of the Cypriot banking sector and rebuild depositors' and market confidence by thoroughly restructuring and downsizing financial institutions and strengthening supervision; (ii) to continue the on-going process of fiscal consolidation in order to correct the excessive general government deficit; and (iii) to implement structural reforms to support competitiveness and sustainable and balanced growth. Cyprus has successfully completed the Economic Adjustment Program in March 2016, sooner than expected, without eventually requiring the full available funding. The decisive implementation of the programme has been regarded as a success story which was attributed to the sense of shared responsibility of the institutions and people to overcome the crisis and to the commitment and determination of the government to undertake the necessary reforms.

During the last five years, the main priority was the restoration of confidence in the Cypriot economy through its stabilization and reactivation. The collective effort focused on stabilizing the financial system, correcting imbalances in public finances, and implementing structural reforms so as to lay the foundations for recovery and the creation of new jobs in terms of social cohesion. The results of the already advanced reforms have begun to become apparent, with the Cypriot economy showing high positive growth rates in 2015 and 2016, with very positive prospects for the coming years. It is necessary, however, to maintain and strengthen the momentum of these reforms while at the same time it is necessary to implement important structural reforms that will lead to an improvement in the productivity and competitiveness of the economy.

The key strategy of the government for the coming years, stipulated in its Fiscal Strategy Statement for 2018-2020, is to consolidate the growth of the real economy, reduce unemployment, further improve competitiveness and create conditions of sustainable development. Further, strengthening the stability of the financial system, consolidating confidence from foreign and local investors and depositors, upgrading the state's credit standing at an investment grade, attracting foreign investment, and further stimulating liquidity in the market are crucial parameters in Cyprus' economic policy. Significant progress has already been made in this direction, but there remain a number of challenges that need to be addressed.

One of the challenges is posed by the high public debt which remains at 107, 8% of GDP<sup>3</sup>, although projections indicate a downward trend based on the growth path of the economy and the continued prudent fiscal policy. The gradual return of the Republic of Cyprus to international markets is based on a Strategic Plan, which was followed with very positive results during 2016.

In terms of strengthening domestic resource mobilization, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection (in accordance to sub-target 17.1) Cyprus has shown remarkable progress with the restructuring of its tax services as part of the administrative reform. The newly formed Tax Department is the outcome of the consolidation of the two existing Tax Departments / Services, responsible for direct and indirect taxation. The reform aims at increasing voluntary compliance, improving tax collection, improving efficiency and effectiveness of services to the taxpayer. Therefore, great emphasis is placed on practices to enhance tax compliance through the revision and modernization of legislation, the adoption of modern practices and procedures and the upgrading of the technological infrastructure with the development of a new IT system.

In relation to tax transparency, Cyprus had been assessed as non-compliant prior to the occurrence of the economic crisis in juxtaposition to the criteria of the model tax convention for

<sup>3</sup> 2016 figure, Eurostat (tsdde410)

exchange of information developed by the OECD Global Forum. However, through tax reform initiatives Cyprus accomplished the standard of being a “broadly conforming country” reflecting the progress achieved in relation to the application of the above-mentioned standard.

In terms of relative indicators (17.1.1) the total government revenue as a proportion of GDP is 39, 2% (2016) and (17.1.2) the proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes accounts for 9, 01%<sup>4</sup> (2015).

Although Cyprus has a relative long tradition in development cooperation (relative sub-target 17.2), within the aforementioned context of economic contraction and consolidation and in need of funding and external financial assistance, inevitably the contribution to foreign development assistance has not been a primary priority. The downward trend of the official development assistance as share of gross national income (%), especially during the outbreak of the crisis, is evident in following table<sup>5</sup>:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
0.15	0.17	0.17	0.20	0.23	0.16	0.12	0.10	0.09	0.09

The development contribution through Official Development Assistance is a commitment for every Member State in the European Union, with the long-term objective to contribute the 0,7% of its GDP. At present, the commitment for a MS that joined EU after 2002 is the 0.33% of its GDP. Currently, Cyprus which joined EU in 2004, devotes a small share of its GDP (close to 0.1%) to activities that can be regarded as Official Development Assistance. In 2015, in absolute terms ODA amounted to €16, 4 million<sup>6</sup>.

Since 2013, the implementation mechanism of Cyprus’s development policy was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), including the relevant budget and resources, although Cyprus Aid's Development Cooperation Agency has suspended its operation due to the economic crisis. As a result, the envelope for technical assistance to third countries and the high costs involved have been included in the MFA's budget since 2014, while staff dealing with ODA has been reduced to the extent of relying exclusively to MFA staff. MFA’s goal is to reactivate the “Development Policy Formulation Agency”, consisting of the MFA, the Ministry of Finance and the DG for European Programmes, Coordination and Development, chaired by the MFA. This mechanism will have a holistic and long-term approach to development assistance as currently, it should be noted, the ODA does not take into account, nor does it come from a specific budget article, but it is rather fragmented in the various activities across all Ministries.

Within the same lines, no coordinator has yet been appointed for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which could be an instrument for political cohesion, thus encumbering the formulation of a comprehensive strategy and the establishment of a mechanism that would supervise and assess the implementation of policies related to sustainable development (relative to sub-target 17.14). In terms of trade facilitation, the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism acts as the coordinator which monitors developments in relation to international trade in the European Union institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO) by coordinating, shaping and promoting Cyprus' positions on the various subjects.

The Doha Round is the forum of trade negotiations between WTO members officially launched in 2001. Its aim is to reform the international trading system through the reduction of trade barriers and revised trade rules. The work program covers about 20 sectors of trade (agricultural products, access to the market for non-agricultural products, services, rules, trade facilitation, etc.). The Doha Round Development Program's goal is to improve the Less Developed Countries' prospects of trade and to address the problems faced by developing countries in the implementation of existing agreements with the WTO. According to its trade balance Cyprus had

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat: Shares of environmental and labour taxes in total tax revenues from taxes and social contributions

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat: Official development assistance as share of gross national income (tsdgp100)

<sup>6</sup> Eurostat: EU financing for developing countries, by type (tsdgp310)

spent 0, 2 bln (2014) for imports from developing countries<sup>7</sup> (relative to sub-target 17.11). Nevertheless, Cyprus as a Member State of the EU, is jointly working on a relevant investment plan, the European Investment Plan, which promotes the guarantee of European companies wishing to invest in LDCs.

In summary, as the biggest challenges faced by the Cypriot economy in recent years have been the recovery of confidence, the gradual halt of the recession and the fight against unemployment, it is certain that with the return to positive growth rates, with the labour market stabilization and the decline of unemployment, the priority will revert to securing sustainable growth in the medium term and long-term horizons. The protracted crisis has hindered Cyprus from undertaking an active role in development assistance policies and further effort and actions are needed in order to establish the coordinating mechanism that will undertake the promotion of the SDG agenda and the interface with the global institutions.

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<sup>7</sup> Eurostat: EU Imports from developing countries by income group (tsdgp210)

## 7. CONCLUSION

As an overview of all government policy integrating all three dimensions of sustainable development through the goals and targets of Agenda 2030, the present review has been a very positive and valuable exercise, and its findings significant. The results indicate that some of the goals are completely achieved, some others partially achieved, while government planning is in place for almost all the goals and targets.

A fundamental element, mentioned in almost all of the individual SDG progress descriptions, was the influence of the economic crisis on Cyprus' relevant policy making in recent years. One of its major consequences has been the concentration of the strategic planning mainly on the economic and social dimensions of policies. Another very important element that greatly influences policy for Cyprus' small-sized administration is the country's EU membership. Planning and legislation in many sectors of primary as well as of secondary priority are amended or introduced due to compliance with the EU *acquis* which sets clear targets and, more often than not, proves to be effective, as well as resource and time saving. A third general finding of the review is the mainly short and medium term planning which covers most SDGs without, however, an explicit link with Agenda 2030 for the moment.

Progress is observed in all the SDGs, while planning is already in place for most of them, especially the priority ones, through all the line policies. The Republic of Cyprus prides for succeeding a number of the targets at a 100% level, many of them in the framework of SDG 3 (health). Cyprus provides free and easily accessible education to everyone at all education levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary general and secondary technical and vocational education and training), without discrimination. The legal framework to ensure sustainable and integrated water resources management in Cyprus as well as optimum use of non-conventional water resources, such as desalination and recycling, are being promoted to address the challenge of limited water resources and supplying excellent quality of drinking water to consumers. There has been an upward trend in the use of renewable sources of energy, while steps are being taken towards a more sustainable tourism product. The efforts made towards combating trafficking in human beings, by effectively enforcing new legislation and expanding the role and competences of the Police Anti-Trafficking Bureau have been notable. Cyprus also actively promotes international cooperation on issues such as the protection of cultural property and regional cooperation for the protection from marine pollution.

Main challenges include, among others, a high public debt and a relatively high unemployment rate after the economic crisis, the low contribution of the agricultural sector in the GDP, energy dependency on imported sources, under-representation of women in political and public life, a need for formulation of a sustainable consumption policy, a high proportion of low achievers in mathematics, science and reading at EU level, as well as increasing ODA to the desired level. Efforts are being made to address all these challenges and relevant policies are being formed or put in place.

In compiling the review, coordination between the relevant lines Ministries involved in the achievement of each SDG's different targets was mostly successful, despite last minute challenges. These, as well as other coordination issues, are directly linked to structural changes still on course. An effort to include all the three dimensions of sustainable development is necessary for any new government programming.

On creating ownership of the SDGs, since 2015, a close cooperation was established between the Cypriot CSOs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture. More efforts need to be made in order to engage with all sectors of Cypriot society, including local authorities and Higher Education Institutions, for the achievement of the SDGs and to enhance the activity of CSOs that deal with the issue. The consultative policy already in place, which assists in defining policy in many sectors covered by the SDGs and the vibrant, democratic dialogue that takes place between the different stakeholders, especially on priority issues such as health, education, migration/integration etc., through the government's public consultation policy, could constitute a very good basis for reinforcement of cooperation and activity.

## Next steps

The process for Cyprus has been initiated with the mapping exercise for the compilation of this report. Next steps include the assignment of a coordinator for SDG achievement at domestic level, with the mandate to overview future strategies and effectively incorporate the SDGs. Once the necessary policies are defined, remaining indicators will need to be selected, in collaboration with the Statistical Service, and benchmarks and targets set by the competent authorities so as to gradually achieve the implementation of the SDGs. Assigning an academic analysis of the results of this review would be a good start.

In the meantime, Cyprus will continue to participate in defining the future EU 2030 agenda as well as in relevant international events. In the framework of reinforcing activity and cooperation between all stakeholders and as a follow up to the online survey organized by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education and Culture on SDGs priorities, an extensive public information campaign will commence, involving government and civil society. More involvement of the House of Representatives is also expected in 2017, following the presentation in the parliamentary Committee on the Environment. Engagement of local authorities is also a necessary step towards creating ownership and involvement of the totality of the Cypriot society.

Cyprus will continue to support the implementation of Agenda 2030, a global partnership based on the principles of universality, mutual accountability and shared responsibility, in an integrated approach addressing the three dimensions of sustainable development. Recent efforts by the Government and the present Voluntary National Review reflect the high level of commitment of a small country such as Cyprus to Agenda 2030. The aim was not only to produce the first review of Cyprus' progress but also to contribute to the international efforts towards ensuring that the SDGs go beyond a reporting exercise, to becoming a real policy and action agenda that will enhance the wellbeing of people everywhere. Cyprus highly values the HLPF as the platform for reviewing and following-up the implementation of the SDGs through an interactive process of peer-learning and sharing of experiences and best practices and mutually-beneficial cooperation, driven by national priorities and taking into account national sovereignty, with the ultimate purpose of supporting the global vision of sustainable development that leaves no one behind.



#### Statistical analysis

This Annex includes a preliminary selection of statistical indicators that can be used to depict the current position of Cyprus relevant to each of the seventeen sustainable development goals. The selection was done by the Statistical Service of Cyprus and largely draws on the EU SDG indicator set. It therefore looks primarily at EU policies contributing to the fulfilment of the SDGs, such as Europe 2020, the 10 Commission Priorities, the Circular Economy package, etc., rather than directly at the goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on which the UN indicators for global monitoring focus. This approach had the advantage that the data were readily available and no significant new data collections needed to be introduced or methodologically developed. As a consequence, the exercise did not entail any significant additional burden on the statistical system and had no substantial financial implications.

A maximum of 5 to 6 indicators have been identified for each SDG, taking into account the development status and the specificities of the country, the availability of data, the quality of the data available and the elimination of indicators that may not be meaningful or relevant to Cyprus. Multipurpose indicators have been assigned to the goal to which they are primarily allocated. Where an indicator selected corresponds either in full or partly to the UN global list, this has been appropriately flagged in the table.

This should be regarded as a first attempt to produce a set of SDG indicators at the national level. It does not aim at proposing a comprehensive monitoring system for the SDGs in Cyprus but only at demonstrating how existing data can be utilized to show how the country currently performs. This preliminary set of SDG indicators is yet to be discussed and agreed with the various stakeholders involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the national SDG policy. More consultations need to be undertaken in order to refine the indicator set and define appropriate baselines and targets for each one of them. The role of the competent ministries remains instrumental in the final selection of the national SDG indicators set.

No.	Indicator name	Correspondence to the indicator set of the UN global list *	Unit of measurement	Year						
				2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>										
1	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion	1.2.2 (s)	% of population	24,6	24,6	27,1	27,8	27,4	28,9	n.a.
2	People at risk of poverty after social transfers	1.2.1 (s) 1.2.2 (p)	% of population	15,6	14,8	14,7	15,3	14,4	16,2	n.a.
3	Severely materially deprived people	1.2.2 (p)	% of population	11,2	11,7	15,0	16,1	15,3	15,4	n.a.
4	People living in households with very low work intensity	1.2.2 (p)	% of population aged less than 60	4,9	4,9	6,5	7,9	9,7	10,9	n.a.
5	Share of total population living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor	11.1.1 (p)	% of population	30,0	29,8	30,0	31,1	25,5	26,5	n.a.
<b>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>										
1	Obesity rate (obese - BMI>30)	2.2.2 (p)	% of population	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	13,9	n.a.	n.a.
2	Government support to agricultural research and development		EUR	1,0	0,6	0,3	0,2	0,2	0,1	n.a.
3	Area under organic farming	2.4.1 (p)	% of total utilised agricultural area	2,8e	2,9e	3,38	4,03	3,63	3,72	n.a.
4	Ammonia emissions from agriculture		million tonnes CO2 equivalent	643,7	633,3	600,1	556,4	559,9	n.a.	n.a.
5	Gross nutrient balance on agricultural land		kg per hectare (Nitrogen)	191e	199e	184e	179e	194e	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b>										
1	Life expectancy at birth		number of years	81,5	81,2	81,1	82,5	82,8	81,8	n.a.
2	Self-perceived health		% of population perceiving their health as very good or good	74,6	75,8	77,2	76,4	77,7	80,3	n.a.
3	Suicide death rate	3.4.2 (i)	number per 100 000 persons	n.a.	16,71	6,72	10,49	5,47	n.a.	n.a.
4	Smoking prevalence (daily smokers)	3.a.1 (s)	% of population	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	25,7	n.a.	n.a.
5	Self-reported unmet need for medical examination and care		% of population aged 16 and over (reason: too expensive)	3,9	4,2	3,4	4,3	4,6	1,5	n.a.

No.	Indicator name	Correspondence to the indicator set of the UN global list *	Unit of measurement	Year						
				2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b>										
1	Early childhood education and care: Pupils aged between 4 years old and the starting age of compulsory education	4.2.2 (s)	% of population at that age group	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	82,6	89,6	64,1	n.a.
2	Early leavers from education and training		% of population aged 18 to 24	12,7	11,3	11,4	9,1	6,8b	5,2	7,7
3	Tertiary educational attainment		% of population aged 30 to 34	45,3	46,2	49,9	47,8	52,5b	54,5	53,4
4	Employment rate of recent graduates		% of population aged 20 to 34 who completed ISCED 3-8	82,2	79,1	76,9	72,2	73,4	74,5	74,7
5	Adult participation in learning	4.3.1 (s)	% of population aged 25 to 64	8,1	7,8	7,7	7,2	7,1	7,5	6,9
<b>Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b>										
1	Gender pay gap		% points	16,8	16,1	15,6	14,9	14,2	14,0	n.a.
2	Gender employment gap		% points	12,9	11,9	11,3	10,4	7,7	8,3	9,8
3	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local government	5.5.1 (i)	% of total seats	12,5	10,7	10,7	14,3	14,3	12,5	17,9
4	Physical and sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner		% of women	n.a.	n.a.	22	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
5	Inactivity rates due to caring responsibilities		% of population aged 20 to 64 looking after children other family responsibilities	9,4	9,8	9,8	9,2	8,4	8,5	9,2
				22,0	20,1	19,8	17,2	15,7	17,9	21,6
<b>Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</b>										
1	Share of total population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household	6.2.1 (s)	% of population	1,1	1,1	0,9	1,0	1,0	0,8	n.a.
2	Water exploitation index (WEI)	6.4.2 (s)	%	62,6	68,8	79,6	79,6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</b>										
1	Percentage of people affected by fuel poverty (inability to keep home adequately warm)		% of population	27,3	26,6	30,7	30,5	27,5	28,3	n.a.
2	Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption	7.2.1 (i)	%	6,0	6,0	6,8	8,1	8,9	9,4	n.a.
3	Primary energy consumption; final energy consumption by sector		million tonnes of oil equivalent i. primary energy ii. final energy	2,7	2,6	2,5	2,2	2,2	2,2	n.a.
				1,9	1,9	1,8	1,6	1,6	1,7	n.a.
4	Final energy consumption in households per capita		1 000 tonnes of oil equivalent	332,5	351,6	345,4	301,1	289,7	317,1	n.a.
5	Energy dependence		% of net imports to sum of gross inland energy consumption plus bunkers	100,8	92,4	97,0	96,3	93,2	97,7	n.a.
6	Energy productivity	7.3.1 (s)	EUR per kg of oil equivalent	7,0	7,2	7,5	8,1	7,8	7,8	n.a.

No.	Indicator name	Correspondence to the indicator set of the UN global list *	Unit of measurement	Year						
				2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>										
1	Real GDP per capita growth rate	8.1.1 (i)	% change on previous year	-1,3	-2,2	-4,6	-5,7	-0,4	2,3p	2,2p
2	Young people neither in employment nor in education and training	8.6.1 (i)	% of population aged 15 to 24	11,7	14,6	16,0	18,7	17,0	15,3	15,9
3	Total employment rate		% of population aged 20 to 64	75,0	73,4	70,2	67,2	67,6	67,9	68,8
4	Long-term unemployment rate		% of total active population	1,3	1,6	3,6	6,1	7,7	6,8	5,8
5	Involuntary temporary employment		% of total employees	30,2	43,3	48,2	52,7	61,4	64,5	64,8
6	Number of fatal accidents at work (NACE Rev. 2 sections A, C-N)	8.8.1 (s)	number	18	5	7	8	4	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</b>										
1	Gross domestic expenditure on R&D	9.5.1 (i)	% of GDP	0,45	0,45	0,43	0,46	0,48	0,46p	n.a.
2	Employment in high- and medium-high technology manufacturing sectors and knowledge-intensive service sectors	9.2.2 (s)	% of total employment	36,0	36,5	36,8	39,3	40,8	39,4	39,7
3	Total R&D personnel	9.5.2 (s)	number of persons	2.628	2.788	2.727	2.978	2.921	n.a.	n.a.
4	Patent applications to the European Patent Office (EPO)		number	7,67	5,63	2,50	7,94e	8,03e	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries</b>										
1	GDP per capita in PPS		EU28=100	100	96	91	84	81	82	n.a.
2	Real adjusted gross disposable income of households per capita in PPS		per capita, in PPS	19.727	18.872	18.038	17.229	16.813p	17.046p	n.a.
3	Relative median at-risk-of-poverty gap		%	18,0	19,0	19,0	17,7	18,5	19,8	n.a.
4	Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income		number	30,1	29,2	31,0	32,4	34,8	33,6	n.a.
5	Number of first time asylum applications per capita		number of persons	2.835	1.745	1.590	1.150	1.480	2.105	2.840
<b>Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b>										
1	Overcrowding rate by degree of urbanisation		% of population	3,6	3,0	2,6b	2,2	2,2	1,2	n.a.
2	Distribution of population by level of difficulty in accessing public transport	11.2.1 (s)	% of population declaring difficulty of access as high and very high	n.a.	n.a.	14,4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
3	People killed in road accidents	3.6.1 (i)	number per 100 000 persons	60	71	51	44	45	57	n.a.
4	Urban population exposure to air pollution by particulate matter	11.6.2 (i)	micrograms per cubic metre (particulates <2,5µm)	22,2	23,2	24,3	17,0	17,2	n.a.	n.a.
5	Proportion of population living in households considering that they suffer from noise		% of population	29,0	27,5	25,7	26,2	19,2	17,2	n.a.
6	Recycling rate of municipal waste	11.6.1 (p)	%	10,7	12,6	13,6	14,6	17,0e	17,9e	n.a.

No.	Indicator name	Correspondence to the indicator set of the UN global list *	Unit of measurement	Year						
				2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>										
1	Generation of waste excluding major mineral wastes	11.6.1 (s)	kg per capita	n.a.	n.a.	964	n.a.	792	n.a.	n.a.
2	Landfill rate of waste excluding major mineral wastes	12.5.1 (s)	%	62	n.a.	59	n.a.	65	n.a.	n.a.
3	Resource productivity	8.4.2 12.2.2 (s)	EUR per kg, chain linked volumes (2010)	0,836	0,855	1,128	1,466	1,452	1,520ps	n.a.
4	Average CO2 emissions per km from new passenger cars		gCO2/km	155,8	149,9	144,3	139,2	130,1p	n.a.	n.a.
5	Volume of freight transport relative to GDP	9.1.2 (s)	index 2005=100	69,1	59,6	58,1	43,7	37,7	38,8	n.a.
<b>Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</b>										
1	Greenhouse gas emissions		index 1990=100	162,5	158,5	149,78	137,13	143,9	n.a.	n.a.
2	Greenhouse gas emissions intensity of energy consumption		index 2000 = 100	104,0	101,8	101,3	99,9	101,7	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</b>										
1	Sufficiency of marine sites designated under the EU habitats directive	14.5.1 15.1.2 15.4.1 (s)	thousand km <sup>2</sup> and sufficiency index (%)	n.a.	n.a.	22	38	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2	Catches in major fishing areas		tonnes live weight	1.400	1.163	1.297	1.166	1.249	1.475	n.a.
3	Fishing and aquaculture as % of GVA		%	0,09	0,17	0,14	0,18	0,18	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</b>										
1	Forest area as a proportion of total land area	15.1.1 (i)	% of total land area	18,8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	18,8	n.a.
2	Sufficiency of terrestrial sites designated under the EU Habitats directive	14.5.1 15.1.2 15.4.1	Sufficiency index (%)	40	n.a.	44b	46	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
3	Estimated soil erosion by water		% of area eroded by more than 10 tonnes per hectare per year	6,12	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>										
1	Death due to homicide, assault	16.1.1 (s)	standardised death rate by 100 000 inhabitants	n.a.	2,34	1,94	1,36	1,14	n.a.	n.a.
2	Share of population which reported occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area	16.1.4 (s)	% of population	12,7	15,0	15,5	15,3	11,9	12,0	n.a.
3	Corruption Perception Index	16.5.2 (s)	Score scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)	n.a.	n.a.	66	63	63	61	55



No.	Indicator name	Correspondence to the indicator set of the UN global list *	Unit of measurement	Year						
				2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</b>										
1	Official development assistance as share of gross national income	17.2.1 (s)	% of GNI	0,23	0,16	0,12	0,10	0,09	0,09	n.a.
2	Cyprus financing for developing countries		million EUR	38,6	27,0	19,5	15,4	13,9	16,4	n.a.
3	Cyprus imports from developing countries		billion EUR	0,8	0,7	0,7	0,5	0,5	n.a.	n.a.
4	General government gross debt		% of GDP	55,8	65,2	79,3	102,2	107,1	107,5	107,8
5	Shares of environmental and labour taxes in total tax revenues		% of total taxes							
			i. environmental taxes	8,7	8,2	8,7	9,2	9,0	n.a.	n.a.
			ii. labour taxes	35,5	35,7	37,1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
6	Total general government revenue as a proportion of GDP		% of GDP	37,0	36,4	36,1	36,5	39,6	39,2	39,2

\* Indicator considered as identical to (i), similar to (s) or part of (p) a UN global SDG indicator as agreed by UNSC. The abbreviations refer to the numbering as applied in the UN list of global SDG indicators.

n.a. = data not available b = break in time series e = estimated

p = provisional

s = Eurostat estimate

Sources:

Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) [www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat)

Statistical Service of Cyprus [www.cystat.gov.cy](http://www.cystat.gov.cy)



## Civil Society's action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Cyprus

*Prepared by the CARDET Team ([www.cardet.org](http://www.cardet.org))*

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## **From the ambitious Millennium Development Goals 2015 to the transformative Sustainable Development Goals 2030**

The present report is an account of the work, the challenges and the prospects of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (for the purposes of this study Civil Society is restricted to Non-Government, Not for profit Organizations<sup>8</sup> filtered by relevance to the SDGs) in raising awareness among Cypriot citizens on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their implementation at local and national contexts. The report critically assesses the collaboration between CSOs and public services and bodies in Cyprus. Its structure includes a presentation and organic analysis of the factors that led to the development of Civil Society Organizations in Cyprus and a sampling of their operations and mode of work through a selection of representative projects since 2015. The report will provide conclusions and suggestions for reinforcement of action for further civil society involvement in strategy designing and implementation as well as action towards achieving the SDGs in Cyprus.

Building on the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Development Agenda by Cyprus (among other 193 countries), its national administration and particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acquired the responsibility to drive the awareness raising initiatives on SDGs at the national context, in collaboration with other local stakeholders and actors. In the case of Cyprus, such an opening by government bodies and the promotion of inclusive decision making was appreciated and perceived as stepping stone towards greater collaboration and synergy with the CSO community. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) are pioneers in this process, with stated goals and intentions (Mavroyiannis, 2015).

### **Local Context for Cypriot CSOs**

CSOs have had a short presence in Cyprus before independence in the 1960s. These organizations were mainly local and regional agriculture cooperatives and politically aimed organizations like Labor unions and political parties. Relative modern CSOs have been slowly emerging especially from the mid-80s onwards (e.g. Pan Cyprian Association and Friends for Cancer patients) but especially in the late 1990s and the 2000s. Cypriot civil society organizations had a diverse origin ranging from Government initiatives and political parties to local branches of international CSOs and the Academia and Grassroots initiatives.

In the early years they tended to be inward looking and had but limited targets (preservation of local bio-systems, awareness campaigns and advocacy for disenfranchised populations) and limited scopes in collaborating with the government other than addressing their specific area of competence.

Cyprus accession in EU in 2004 has proved to be the single most important factor into the development of the civil society field in Cyprus. EU's structural funds provided the impetus for expanding the horizons of the CSO community at large, and more directly of a particular segment of the Cypriot CSOs, the ones mainly focused on education and awareness raising for social issues. Data seem to suggest that a robust understanding of the importance of development cooperation exists and by extension indicating a more pronounced sensitivity to issues of sustainable development (New Eurobarometer survey shows continued high support for development cooperation among EU citizens, 2017).

Over the past 10 years, Cypriot CSOs, with an expanded and outward outlook and scope, have had to develop particular affordances through their collaboration with governmental bodies in order to be utilized for the benefit of greater goals (e.g. the promotion of global citizenship and sustainable development education). The escalating participation of CSOs in funded programs

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<sup>8</sup> The World Bank has adopted a definition of civil society developed by a number of leading research centres: "the term civil society to refer to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations" (The World Bank, 2013).

and projects aiming at the awareness raising of citizens in areas related to sustainable development, improved their capacity to access and influence local communities, having a good understanding of the complexities, challenges and limitations of adapting global issues to local contexts.

The extensive networks of European and Global partner organizations, domestic experts, practitioners and associates, developed by local SCOs over these years, are capable of assisting the Cyprus government in organizing communication initiatives or accessing specialized services that could support government efforts in SDGs awareness raising. Additionally, by accessing and utilizing their extended networks, Cypriot CSOs can retrieve best practices, methodologies and create synergies for local actions at a European and Global level.

In this framework, due to the good cooperation with the competent government authorities (MOEC and MFA) and their recognition of the CSOs' expertise and capacity to contribute, the CSOs in Cyprus have an active role in drafting, communicating and implementing the initiatives for raising awareness concerning the SDGs among local citizens.

The primary driving force at policy level for the promotion of SDGs in Cyprus is the MFA, which had a coordinating role for the implementation of the SDGs in Cyprus since 2015. With the occasion of the participation of Cyprus in the promotion of the European Year for Development 2015 (EYD2015), the MFA, in its capacity as National Coordinator of the EYD2015 national programme, in close collaboration with the MOEC and the Cypriot platform of non-governmental development organizations CYINDEP, shaped and implemented activities, which aimed at creating citizens' awareness for global issues with a special emphasis on our youth. Events took place during the whole year, in all cities and included lectures, films, art exhibitions. Symbolically, the MFA organized the closing ceremony of the EYD2015 program in the Cyprus House of Representatives at the beginning of 2016, taking the opportunity to inform the Parliament's Foreign and European Affairs Committee on Agenda 2030. On that same year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the process of evaluation of Agenda 2030 in Cyprus, in order to identify points where Cyprus needed to focus its short, medium and long-term planning for achievement of the SDGs. Up to this day, MFA supported inclusive decision making in formulating new initiatives and interventions to raise awareness on the SDGs. Such initiatives included workshops for the local community, invited speakers, photo exhibitions, and info-days, as well as an online survey, which was launched by the MFA and MOEC, but was drafted and distributed in collaboration with CSOs.

From its part, the MOEC created a cross-sectoral committee of education inspectors, education staff and CSO practitioners who provide support in the design and development of programs and initiatives within the schools, related with the SDGs. The Ministry of Education has been a focal point for Global and Sustainable matters and their pivotal engagement has enabled Cypriot CSOs dealing with educational matters unprecedented access and continuous collaboration opportunities. A critical understanding to the disproportionate prevalence of the MOEC is to acknowledge the fact that single issue CSOs have had to have a critical relationship with the relevant ministries in order to advocate, support or oppose developments in their respective areas of focus.

## **Raising Awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals**

CSOs in Cyprus, through their participation in EU funded programs, have been very active and cover a great variety of issues and sectors. From protection of human and Community rights, recycling, support to vulnerable populations, to peace education, to global citizenship education and innovative learning techniques.

Despite the very active role of Cypriot CSOs, there haven't been many initiatives that directly raise awareness towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Although the MFA and MOEC provide the necessary political support, CSOs haven't managed to access funding to promote such initiatives and fill out this gap. Additionally, many CSOs in Cyprus have not yet developed sufficient capacity and understanding to link their activities with SDGs. It is only during the second semester of 2017, that local CSOs have been awarded with EU projects specifically targeting the promotion of awareness raising on the SDGs in the EU members. Some examples of such projects, expected to commence in November 2017 are the following:



“Developing capacities together. European CSO-university networks for global learning on migration, security and sustainable development in an interdependent world (Inter-Cap)” (to be led by the Cypriot NGO, CARDET)

“Walk the (Global) Walk: mobilizing European young people in support of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

In view of the above, a challenge for the MFA and the active NGOs in the field of SDGs is to raise awareness, both vertically and horizontally, to other NGOs, public services and citizens. Having said that, it is important to note that a large percentage of the goals and targets are indirectly included in many CSOs’ mandates or current projects and initiatives, given the vast thematic spectrum of Agenda 2030. Nevertheless, as noted above, CSOs already working in SDGs could expand their workings in collaboration with the MFA and the Cyprus Commissioner of Volunteerism and CSOs to offer training and support to other local actor for their further engagement in SDGs initiatives.

Despite the abovementioned current shortfalls of the CSOs, the breadth and depth of their actions covers almost all of the goals including quality education, innovation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, life on land, good health and well-being, climate action, sustainable cities and communities, gender equality, reduction of inequalities, integration, peace, justice and strong institutions, protection of the environment and good governance as well as partnerships for the goals. Beyond, the multiple projects Cypriot CSOs are implementing at the time, they also act as multipliers through a great pool of expert trainers who are capable to contribute significantly both in the process of promotion of the SDGs at the general public and in the training of other operators to increase the capacity of the Civil Society sector. The ongoing support provided by MOEC and MFA could serve as a motive for more CSOs and practitioners to be engaged in such initiatives.

Thus, on the one hand, a respectable number of projects produce educational resources mainly focused on soft skills and capacity building. On the other hand, there are awareness and advocacy projects focused on global citizenship concepts and innovative educational methods addressed to multipliers, including but not limited to CSO trainers, government officers and the general public with focus on specific SDGs issues (automation, migrant integration, active and innovative learning etc.). Realizing the great importance to inform and train, properly and in depth, agents of change in strategic positions, it is of paramount importance to provide them with the civil society perspective, which could potentially inform their decision and empowering their societal impact. For this reason, the combined efforts by the CSOs and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education and Culture have been efficient and effective in delivering a number of activities with substantial impact on citizens, public servants, practitioners and other stakeholders in the fields of SDGs. Further down we provide a selection of such actions and initiatives.

### **Educational Projects**

An example of the aforementioned, specific “train the trainer” goal within the wider objective of raising awareness for the SDG agenda, took place during a three hour **workshop on the SDGs framework and its importance for youth, organised during the 2016 Youth Academy on 06/12/2016. Following up is a short description of two projects implemented in Cyprus in the framework of this field.**

Project '**Combating Hate Speech: Training of Trainers' European Youth Foundation Pilot Project October 2015** organized by AEQUITAS organization. This pilot activity consisted in a training of eighteen trainers aged 21-30 from the formal and non-formal educational sectors for purposes of empowering them to integrate the fight against extremism and hate speech online in their work. The project sought to enhance the participants’ knowledge of the issue of hate and extremism online and facilitate their understanding of the significance of human rights education and other innovative methodology and tools like living libraries and flash.

Project '**Combating Islamophobia in Cyprus'**, a collaboration between NGO *Aequitas* and E.N.A.R. (European Network against Racism) in November 2016. A pilot study has been commissioned by ENAR in order to determine the issues pertaining to islamophobia in Cyprus. TA training to

Ministry of Education officers, Interior Ministry Officers, Immigrants Associations, Human Rights activists, NGO volunteers and journalists was provided in the form of a round table discussion.

In addition to the above, educational projects and actions are addressed to academics, teachers from primary and secondary education, school leaders, educational officials and policy makers. Since education is the most efficient means to pass to diffuse the ideas and principles of the Agenda 2030. Providing quality education is not only the basis of the specific Goal 4 but underpins the successful implementation of a whole host of goals. The Agenda 2030 has such a long horizon for implementation in part because it speaks to a need to transform societal practices. Education seems to be the only way to build competences, multipliers and stakeholders that will become the change agents and provide the time and space for exponential grassroots adoption of the improved attitude to incorporate global inter-complexities needed for the political prioritization and adoption of the Goals 2030. On a second level, a change of political narrative and a social discourse is required in order for the prioritization of the transformative Agenda 2030 to take hold. This can only happen through low level grassroots narrative shifting that can only be achieved through educational as well as awareness actions (Michail & Themistokleous, 2016)

This field has seen particular growth in Cyprus. One of the most active NGOs in Cyprus in this field is CARDET, implementing a series of projects related to the Sustainable Development Goals particularly for projects who had their starting point during the seminal European Year of Development 2015, the first year where the EU chose to emphasize not only its responsibility towards the European citizens but also its commitment to the world citizens by acknowledging its importance as an agent of global change.

Project **iDecide**, developed by CARDET aims to develop an innovative toolkit and induction course to support evidence-based policy making that can lead to the reduction of disparities in learning outcomes and marginalization, by supporting school leaders, school staff, and policymakers to engage in shared and inclusive decision making. This project can be linked with the SDG 10, which focuses in the reduction of inequalities and until its completion is estimated that will reached more than 500 policymakers, 200 inspectors, 500 educational authority officials, 1000 school leaders, 2000 teachers/school staff and 200 academic.

Project **Schools for Future Youth (SFYouth), 2014-2017** (Erasmus+) (<http://sfyouth.eu/index.php/en/>). This project is a cross-field partnership to improve youth participation in European school education, running from 2014-2017. Working in four countries – the UK, Italy, Cyprus and Poland – the project will use Youth Participation through Global Citizenship (YPGC) to support improved curriculum and pedagogical approaches by teachers, and increased civic engagement and transversal skills development by young people. The project consortium developed a comprehensive learning package called SFYouth Toolkit, which includes a range of critical thinking activities, quizzes, workshops, presentations and photos that will help young people to understand a number of global issues, why they are important, and what can be done about them. The issues covered within this section include climate change, poverty, food insecurity, quality education, health and well-being, inequality, refugees and humanitarian aid. All these issues reflect and incorporate most of the SDGs.

Project **Future Youth School Forums (FYS-Forums) 2015-2018** (<http://fys-forums.eu/>) is a cross-field strategic partnership funded by Erasmus +, which aims to create a model for school led global citizenship youth forums. FYS-Forums use a transferable methodology, and bring together a broad range of partners spanning academic, educational, global, and youth work disciplines. Project partners developed educational material on migration and refugees for the first round of school participated more than 250 students and teachers. The learning package was called “People forced to flee” and can referred to the goals for decent Work and Economic Growth and the Decrease of Inequality. The material was pilot tested during the period of 2016 - 2017. The consortium is now working on the development of a new educational package on the theme of “Gender Equality”. As the title reveals this package will be focuses in gender equality, and all forms of inequality in general as well as to Quality Education and Good Health and Well Being. This material will be pilot tested during 2017-2018.

Another very active NGO focused on the promotion of Equality, Peace and Justice through Quality Education, is The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research through a range of activities, such as teacher training workshops and the creation of supplementary materials.

During 2016, the AHDR in association with Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS), NGO Support Centre, University of Nicosia - Cyprus Centre for European and International Affairs (CCEIA), implement the project 'Gender as a missing lens - How to introduce gender into history teaching' which focus in gender equality. The project's objective was to raise awareness and increase the capacity of educators across Cyprus in order to empower them to integrate a gender equality perspective in their teaching practices, while making students in Cyprus more aware of gender equality and better equipped to adopt a gender approach, incorporate critical thinking and a multi-perspectival approach to learning. The trainings took place across the island. Training will take place in Nicosia, at the 'Home for Cooperation' within the UN Buffer Zone, in Famagusta and Limassol, that gave the opportunity to educators to receive the training in their respective language, ensuring that the benefits will have an island-wide outreach (<http://www.ahdr.info/viewarticlesub.php?scid=72>).

Another three year project related to Development goals of quality Education, Peace and Justice is the **Education for a Culture of Peace as a Vehicle for Reconciliation in Cyprus**. The project is contacted in association with Post Research foundation and funded by the European Commission and aims to use education as a platform where one can depart to bring structural changes in society. The main aim of the project is to bring a societal change and transform the current status-quo through a bottom-up approach by engaging educators, young people, parents, community members, and civil society into an educative and transformational process. The project is considered vital since the conflict between the two communities in Cyprus is still on-going, while the Culture of War is maintained, with the major agents of change (i.e.: educational system, faith representatives/bodies, media, and other) currently perpetuating it (<http://www.ahdr.info/viewarticlesub.php?scid=70>).

#### **GlobaLab project – 6 Steps to Global Citizenship (06/2015 – 05/2017) – emphasis on Goal 4 (4.7)**

Funded by EU – Erasmus+, The project developed a Learning Framework for Global Citizenship Education, implemented an international and local workshops on Global Citizenship Education and just recently published the Toolguide '6 Steps to Global Citizenship', relating directly to Goal 4.7 [www.globalab.org](http://www.globalab.org)

Taking into consideration all the above, it been easily perceived that Quality and Holistic Education is the key to create gradually the world that we imagine within the Agenda 2030. A world where the natural environment is not threatening any more, the poverty is eliminated and around the world there are sustainable societies which grow and prosper in peace with each other and with the natural ecosystem. However, the benefits of the education will be visible in the long term. At this point is important, to emphasize that Cyprus CSOs, specialized particularly in educational and training activates, as are fields where Cyprus has a reserve of experts and practitioners, funding for education is more accessible and educational services are considered instructionally and administratively more manageable for the local COSs.

#### **Awareness Campaigns**

Another set of projects that are beginning to become more prevalent lately are awareness and advocacy campaigns. One bright example is the project **Social and Solidarity Economy as an alternative approach to Development (SUSY - Sustainable and Solidary Economy)**. The project has as a goal to document the best examples of Social and Solidarity Enterprises in the target areas and then promote and advocate these examples to inspire and empower people, governments and organizations to consider it as a serious alternative to economic development to the continuous crises developing in the more restricted viewpoint of traditional profit only approach.

The project is directly related to the Sustainable Developments Goals about Eradication of Poverty, Decent Work and Economic Growth, creation of Sustainable cities and communities, Responsible Consumption and Production and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. It also relates to all other goals as it promotes a holistic approach between the business sector, the environment, resources and the rights of communities/people. As it is very acutely observed in the UN Sustainable Development Goals website "For the goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part: governments, the private sector, civil society, and people".

The project's main objective was to identify, on the ground, the regulatory and practical state of Social and Solidarity Enterprises in Europe using best practices identified in each country to

provide a grounded vehicle through which to inspire people, civil society organizations and governments to adopt responsible models of economic activity that incorporate more than just the profit motive in their processes and outcomes. In Cyprus, the report was specifically pertinent, as social and solidarity businesses are a new reality in Cyprus. Although Cooperatives are a well-established institution with roots stretching back a century, the law does not provide a framework for this new tool of economic organization.

As the Cypriot government is in the process of introducing this much needed legislative framework (Law on Social Enterprises – <https://goo.gl/JK7p93>) the project proved invaluable in providing a grounded starting point from where to launch this process. Moreover, it offered the opportunity to key stakeholders to research the topic, thus preparing them to transfer their acquired expertise when called to assist in formulating a policy that will have a real impact to society and monitoring the way it will be implemented.

Another important project which belongs to the same category is called **“Time for change: Promoting sustainable consumption and production of raw materials in the context of EYD 2015 and beyond!”** This project directly refers to SDG 12 and its aim is to make population in 15 European countries of the Global North aware of the adverse effects that global production supply chains have in the global south in terms of community rights and the natural environment.

The campaign focused directly in the issue of conflict minerals (extractive activities performed in active conflict zones where no supervision or standards can be monitored and end up financing and perpetuating oppressive regimes). Through the campaign actions CARDET produced materials, funded reports, participated in 6 national Fairs over 2 years, organized local actions in municipalities and universities, organized 2 conferences, participated in 3 international conferences, built and updated an online presence, implemented a speaker tour with an expert from South Africa, and funded or co-authored publications in media outlet reaching close to 22000 people through its various activities. It also focused heavily on multipliers (135), being teachers, academic personnel, politicians, government officers, journalists, industry participants or civil society organizations to create awareness that would lead into a more active representation of these issues in the Cyprus Discourse.

The timing of the campaign was also very prescient, as it coincided with the ultimately successful attempt to create a legal framework for the importation of Raw Materials in Europe which albeit not perfect, represents the best effort worldwide to date. This need for local awareness and engagement to tackle global challenges perfectly encapsulates the role of Civil Society in the societal processes.

The last example is the fascinating **EuropeAid project EAThink 2015 (Global Learning for Change in EYD2015 and Beyond: European Youth Engagement from School Gardens to Sustainable Food Systems) ([www.eathink2015.org](http://www.eathink2015.org))**. In the context of, “EAThink2015 – eat local, think global” primary and secondary schools of 12 European and 2 African countries funded by the European Union with the objective of enhancing European students’ and teachers’ critical understanding and active engagement in global development challenges, with a specific focus on food security and sovereignty, sustainable food systems and smallholder farming.

This project can be related with 14 over 17 SDGs, especially the goals relevant with the standard of living (poverty, hunger, good health and well-being), Education about Global Problems (like the access in clean water and sanitation, climate changes and life both above and below water), Sustainable Social and Economic Growth (employment responsible consumption and production, sustainable cities and communities) and finally promotes protection of farmers and consumers rights.

#### **Project Make Fruit Fair project (03/2016 – 02/2017) – emphasis on Goal 4 and Goal 12**

Funded by EuropeAid, implemented Europe-wide. A campaign-project advocating for fairer supply chains in exotic fruits such as bananas and pineapples. Activities have included public actions, workshops, roundtables, stakeholder meetings and petitions. [www.makefruitfair.org](http://www.makefruitfair.org)

#### **Map Your Meal project [www.mapyourmeal.org](http://www.mapyourmeal.org) (01/01/2015 – 31/12/2017) – emphasis on Goal 4 (4.7)**



Funded by EuropeAid, the project aims at enhancing awareness and understanding of the interdependencies of our global food system, the role we play as citizens and consumers and encourage young people to take action to create positive change.

### **Supply Change project (01/01/2015 – 31/12/2017) – emphasis on Goal 4 and Goal 12**

Funded by EuropeAid, implemented Europe-wide. In a collaborative EU-wide effort, we are striving to find solutions to the growing challenge of reducing environmental impacts and improving working conditions along the global supply chains of store brand (also known as ‘own brand’ or ‘private label’) food products in European supermarkets. Activities we implemented include public events (photo exhibitions, discussions, roundtables), stakeholder meetings, petitions and publication of reports on supply chains (orange juice, chocolate, cookies, palm oil) [www.supplychainge.org](http://www.supplychainge.org)

### **Participation in advocacy and policy activities to promote global citizenship education**

through regular meetings with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Meeting with the Educational Committee of the Cyprus Parliament – all of these in coordination with other NGOs in Cyprus.

Also participation at relevant EU-level meetings, such as HUB 4 of CONCORD, North South Center Regional Seminar, GENE Roundtable in Brussels, EUROBAN Meetings, Milan Expo

Closing the list of projects related to the promotion and implementation of 2015 Sustainable Developments Goals we have to acknowledge the efforts that have been made by the Cypriot CSOs, with special focus in raising awareness about the Agenda 2030. However considering the size and the multilateralism of local CSO, is clear that far greater initiatives and actions can be implemented.

## **Long Road Ahead**

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

The Republic of Cyprus undersigned the commitment for the Agenda 2030 alongside other 192 countries in the world. The Cypriot Civil Society Organizations, through the ongoing support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, have had a pivotal role in raising awareness on the SDGs in these first two years of this Global UN initiative, We believe that they also have a key role in implementing Agenda 2030.

Three examples of this collaborative and inclusive approach and its potential benefits are presented below.

1. Educational resources produced through innovative teaching methodologies by highly capable experts could potentially be the basis of an ever increasing cooperation between the government and CSOs in order to provide synergies both in terms of combining formal and non-formal education techniques (games and active based learning etc.), as well as customizing learning for particular populations (refugees, rural women etc.) and shifting learning towards the desperately needed Global Citizenship education (climate change, financial literacy etc.).
2. Using new and innovative ideas to solve old, as well as new problems. Encouraging and supporting alternative methods of economic organizations like cooperatives or Social and Solidarity economy initiatives (SSE) that have been adopted and encouraged globally could prove to be efficient ways to solve problems by empowering the people to become problem solvers without engaging in a direct lengthy political and bureaucratic process for sustainable development and the Agenda 2030. It’s providing a stand to people to use their individual talents to solve problems in their local communities. All that was requested in Cyprus<sup>9</sup> was enabling local expertise (academia/grassroots) and provide the inspiration of best practices from the EU, through its global networks, teamed with the willingness of the relevant government authority to engage the CSOs in stakeholder consultation. The effect could very well multiply tremendously the capacity of the Cypriot society to progress towards achieving the Agenda 2030.

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<sup>9</sup> See project SUSY (p.8)



3. Creating awareness and informed global citizens that become agents of change and create a robust counter-weight to the self-narrow interest of specific stakeholders (sustainable production and consumption etc.).

As suggested in the present overview, the Cypriot civil society, in synergy with the government, has a large capacity in inspiring and implementing specialized tasks with the flexibility and expert knowledge of the specific field. MFA and MOEC have been insightful to detect CSOs affordances and capacity in effectively delivering programs related to SDGs awareness raising, inviting them to actively participate in decision making, drafting and carrying out collaboratively the national plan on education on SDGs as well as other activities. CSO participation in Cyprus' Voluntary National Review is also indicative of the good cooperation and the Government's will to act in synergy with CSOs in implementing Agenda 2030. It cannot be overstated that the cross-target quality of education, presented in the beginning of the present report, is the one change that has long lasting and far reaching effects over the political development and gradual societal transformation stemming from the targets.

In order for Cypriot CSO capacities to be fully realized, a number of steps need to be taken so that capacities, actions and projects are not fragmented and on an ad hoc basis but targeted and deliberate. Below we present two step recommendations for achieving a higher quality inspiration and implementation of Agenda 2030.

1. **Formal institutionalization of relevant Civil Society Organizations.** Both governmental departments and CSOs need to deepen their collaboration and mutual support. While relationships with specific departments can be long-lasting and seamless (e.g. MFA, Ministry of Justice and Public Order and MOEC), they depend, at least up to a degree, to the specific projects, initiatives and obligations that pop-up periodically for both parties. CSOs are often struggling to access and communicate with other government departments and their contacts and cooperation are more sporadic and largely on an ad hoc basis (Directorate General for European Programmes, coordination and development, asylum service, police department, department of social services, labor department, Ministry of Justice etc.). On the other hand, many government departments are seeking CSOs that could offer suggestions for quality upgrading their policy drafting and implementation. A more coherent and sustained involvement in the policy making process both in the executive but also in the legislative functions is of paramount importance to coordinate actions and have the maximum possible impact, as well as increasing shared capacities through a continuous flow of information from the government sector to the CSOs and vice versa. This can only be achieved by defining a dedicated "liaison" that facilitates these exchanges. Initial steps towards this direction could be the collaborative design and implementation of funded programs from government departments and CSOs at both local and EU level. The institutionalization of the Volunteer Commissioner as well as the gradual adoption of public consultations have been steps towards the right direction in the democratization of the policy process, even though consistency across the governing structures and standard practices need to be established and continuously monitored.
2. **Establishing a dedicated Government Authority for Sustainable Development.** A department, or ministry for development, could set, oversee, analyze the results and adapt its national and international strategy according to the national capabilities and the international needs. To elaborate on our proposal, this department would need to be inter-ministerial and interdepartmental, and it would be best if the authority could draw its authority directly from the government leadership. This would allow it to overview all policies through the filter of sustainability, as defined in the targets but not restricted to it, and be able to initiate, guide, amend actions and raise possible concerns over potential conflict of priorities. This department would also need to create a coherent set of data collection tools in order to monitor the efficacy of the targets and evaluate their progress. It will need to have its own budget allocated from the national budget, as opposed to the current practice. This would signal externally as well as internally that the Republic of Cyprus considers the targets as a priority and would introduce a more serious discourse with the government agencies. Inevitably, the first step needed after establishing this authority will be to finally conclude a coherent national sustainable development and development cooperation strategy (Krichewsky, 2003) drawing from the technical expertise of the ministries, the legislative

branch, the judicial branch, local authorities, political parties and, of course, the Civil Society and the General Public. This process of establishing this national strategy will need to strive for consensus, and create a road map of processes that will be accessible by all stakeholders involved, judged through rational data analysis and implemented in the most efficient and impact maximizing way possible in the long run. In terms of the civil society is concerned this department must strive to build a relationship and provide the necessary assistance to the individuals, organizations and initiatives that have the drive, capacity and knowledge to implement their narrow focus to be able to keep their operations and best practices long enough to come to fruition and be able to have a long lasting impact. A gradual and consistent support for the civil society community in Cyprus will remove the volatility of the CSOs and allow them to become truly effective and to be able to come together and form an allegiance that would help transform the world to the better. Until that day comes however civil society organizations need to collaborate as closely as possible in order to be able to maximize their cumulative impact.

### **3. Expansion of capabilities**

While the spread of capacities of the local CSOs seem to be quite diverse, Cyprus CSOs either need to continually invest in new capabilities to be able to provide world class services within the purview of their area of focus (underdeveloped areas may include SDG 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15) but also to expand their comfort zones and establish operations outside the country of origin. This is especially important as Cyprus is currently a stability hub through the volatile Middle – Eastern region and has all the pre-requisites to develop regional and even international interventions in the future that could act as the long arm of the, hopefully, renewed development cooperation efforts (Bernadett, 2011).

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