

Cyprus Delegation:  
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## **Sustainable Islands. Case Study - Cyprus**

### **1. General Information about Cyprus**

#### Location and Area:

Cyprus is situated in the north-eastern corner of Mediterranean basin, at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa.

With an area of 9.251 sq. km, Cyprus is the third largest Mediterranean island, after Sicily and Sardinia. An area of 3.354 sq. km or 37% of the total, is still under Turkish occupation, and further 277 sq. km or 3% of the total, constitutes the territory of the British Sovereign Base Area.

#### Population:

Cyprus has an estimated population of 837.000 people (2004) of whom the 77.8% belong to the Greek Cypriot community, 10.5% to the Turkish Cypriot community and 11.7% are foreigners permanently residing in Cyprus

#### Economy:

The Cyprus economy is based on the free enterprise system. The private sector is the backbone of economic activity with the government's role being limited to indicative planning and the provision of public utilities.

Although the blow inflicted on the economy by the Turkish invasion of 1974 was severe, recovery was remarkable and by 1979 GDP surpassed its pre-1974 level.

The per capita income (US \$ 20.230 – 2004) is one of the highest in the Middle East and southeast Europe and the highest among the other nine countries that joined E.U. on the 1<sup>ST</sup> of May 2004.

### **2. The Republic and European Union Accession**

Cyprus became independent and was proclaimed a Republic on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 1960.

Turkey, using as a pretext a coup staged by the Greek military junta, launched an invasion on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 1974, occupied 37% of the land and displaced 200.000 Greek Cypriots, representing at the time 40% of the total Greek Cypriot population.

The issues examined below therefore, as well as all Cyprus responsibilities and obligations to the U.N., the E.U. and others, relate only to the southern free part of the island, where the Republic can effectively exercise control.

Cyprus, like Malta, became a European member on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004.

### **3. Cyprus and Sustainable Development Policies**

Sustainable development is a fundamental target set by the E.U., the U.N. and various other organizations.

- Figardou Case – an example of sustainable development of the past -

It is my thesis however that 'Sustainability' is a popular and fashionable misunderstood term for what has already existed for thousands of years now. It has always been a natural instinct for humans in the past to achieve a sustainable environment. These traditional living practices and methodologies have allowed the survival and development of the societies in past years.

As Theocharis David, Professor of Architecture at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn N. Y., said at a seminar organized in Cyprus, not very long ago: ***“What we now call ‘sustainable growth’ was then born out of necessity for humans to enter into a symbiotic and balanced relationship with their indigenous environment, in order to sustain themselves within it. It never had a name, it was natural and logic and it is only today that we can recognize what it was.”***

History and nature have provided the essential attributes to the character of the environment of Cyprus, which is a mixture of natural and cultural features, whose quality remains quite good, on the whole. However, the 1974 invasion, the continuing occupation of 37% of its territory, and rapid economic development over the last three decades, accompanied with rising standards of living and considerable changes in lifestyles, have led to a variety of environmental pressures and strains on the country's natural fabric.

One of the greater challenges now encountered, is the rational planning and management of development, so as to satisfy basic human needs, enhance the quality of life, protect the environment, ensure the rational use of natural resources and leave open the options of future generations.

Cyprus response in the form of environmental protection measures has been substantial, particularly following the 1992 Rio Conference. It was given a further impetus after 1995, owing to the political commitment to streamline environmental legislation and policy with those of the European Union's, on the road of Cyprus towards accession to the Union, in 2004. The country's policy is in line with the EU's 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme (EAP), Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS), the Cardiff process, the Lisbon Strategy and a number of new and evolving Strategies.

Cyprus also pursues those country-specific and relevant commitments emanating from the Johannesburg Summit, UNEP'S Mediterranean Action Plan and its evolving Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, and the Environment for Europe process.

### **4. Environmental Sustainable Development Framework**

Cyprus's policy for Sustainable Development is implemented through multi-annual strategic development programmes and environmental management plans.

Instead of developing new mechanisms for delivery of the sustainable development commitments to the U.N., E.U. and others, Cyprus has incorporated those commitments into its on-going work on economic development, protection of the environment and management of its natural resources.

Over the last decade, 4 strategic programmes were put in place, which interact to constitute what in every respect is the country's sustainable development/ environmental management policy framework.

Those are:

**1. Action Plan for the Protection of the Environment (1996).**

The plan was based on an environmental review and action plan prepared by the World Bank in 1993 and a 1995 report comparing the country's environmental policy with that of the E.U.'s

**2. National Programme for the Adoption of the Environmental Acquis Communautaire of the E.U. (2000, revised and extended in 2002).**

It was prepared following a comprehensive analysis of the policies and legal instruments of the European Union.

**3. Strategic Development Plan (2004 – 2006).**

This latest of the Developments plans of Cyprus, was approved in April 2003, and aimed to incorporate sustainability into social and economic policies.

**4. Strategy for the Environment (2005 – 2010).**

It reflects the commitments under the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation, and priorities of the environmental acquis communautaire.

The abovementioned policy, strategic but also implementation documents have identified what needed to be done in economic, social and environmental terms, to achieve environmentally sustainable development. They cover both sectoral and thematic issues and concentrate on action at the national level but taking full account of Cyprus's international commitments.

## **STRATEGY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

The most recent and most relevant document, **The Strategy for the environment (2005 - 2010)** is briefly analysed below.

The Strategy was prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment in close co-operation with all sectors of government, civil society, the private sector, etc. This document is currently receiving the final touches in order to be presented to the Council of Ministers for approval.

The Strategy aims to achieve a high standard of living, in combination with the protection of the environment and to ensure that the protection of the environment is taken into account when decisions are taken in other sectors such as transport, energy and tourism.

The Strategy has been formulated bearing under very serious consideration that, in broad terms, 6 strategic priorities are all subjects of current public policy concerns that call for major changes in order to avoid big losses of natural capital and increased social and national risks and disparities, not to mention economic dead ends.

These are:

- The scarcity and unevenness of **water resources**,
- The disparity of **energy resources**,
- The challenges provided by the **transport sector** that is currently undergoing fast changes, but is also becoming an important source of disturbance,
- The rapid growth of **towns**,
- The **rural space** tied intimately to the very future of towns, and
- The **littoral** (space between land and sea) that became the setting for every kind of pressure, being a unique natural space as well as very limited area, with high potential for economic development.

The main sectors the Strategy covers are the following:

**a. Horizontal issues:** They refer to measures that cover a wide range of issues, such as Research and Technology, Environmental Education, Impact Assessment, Environmental Liability, Environmental Information, Integration of Environmental Aspects into other policies, and Voluntary Agreements.

Actions already taken include:

- Further enhancement of environmental Education through seminars, leaflets, usage of media;
- The adoption of grants schemes for the promotion of usage of environmentally friendly Technology;
- The establishment, in 2004, of the Cyprus Institute for the Environment and Public Health in association with The Harvard Institute of Public Health;
- An identification of public Awareness needs and preparation of public awareness enhancement programme;
- The preparation of a policy statement for the countryside and of land use plans for the main urban areas;
- The adoption and implementation of a sustainable Tourism action plan;
- The full implementation of a comprehensive environmental Impact assessment system;
- The withdrawal of all subsidies that conflict with the European Aquis.

**b. Nature and Biodiversity:** Through a wide range of actions, the Strategy aims to protect this heritage and make people more aware and sensitive, on issues such as preserving Habitats, Species, the Landscape and the Coastal zone; protect Soils and combat Desertification; pursue Agro-environmental measures; sustainably manage Marine resources; safeguard Forest biodiversity; and regulate Biotechnology.

Over the last few years, particular emphasis was placed in identifying and mapping habitats of European significance.

- 32 sites, covering approximately 14% of the area under government control, have been identified as being of Nature 2000 potential and special programmes partly financed by E.U., are currently being implemented to prepare management plans and interventions for some of these sites.
- A Forest Biodiversity Management Action Plan was also adopted and is being implemented, including National forest parks management and construction of a network of well organized environmental information Centres.
- A Coastal defense management plan is to be initiated this year.

**c. Environment and quality of life:** The protection of human health and the quality of life is one of the priorities set by the Strategy, which incorporates the necessary measures to safeguard the environment and human health in the sectors of Chemicals, Pesticides, Water pollution, Noise control, Radiation protection and improving the quality of the Urban environment.

Programmes have in the meantime been initiated for urban sustainability Indicators;

- Noise pollution assessment;
- Air quality assessment;
- Water quality protection;
- Urban and rural sanitation, Wastewater treatment and reuse of tertiary treated effluent.

Work has been initiated for a major integrated pollution prevention and control programme, covering industrial enterprises: a central Industrial wastewater treatment plan was constructed.

Other initiatives include:

- A study for Sustainable mining and quarrying;
- Sea water Desalination plants; assessment of Marine pollution from land-based activities;
- Operation of port waste collection and transfer services.

**d. Sustainable management of resources and wastes:** The environmental sector with the most challenges is undoubtedly the management of waste. The goals as set in the Strategy focus on the reduction of the amount of wastes produced, their Reuse and Recycling and the Land filling of the non- recyclable wastes in sanitary landfills.

Central to the waste management efforts are:

- The Waste Management Strategy;
- The tendering of major initiative to establish Packaging waste collection points for recycling;

- The implementation of major activity for Landfills closure and rehabilitation and the building of a few new ones;
  - The establishment of a central Hazardous waste treatment and disposal plant.
- e. **Climate Change:** The efforts in this very crucial sector, focus on the reduction of the emissions of greenhouse gases and follow the actions set by the European Climate Change Programme, targeting: special Energy planning and management plans; Renewable energy promotion programmes; Climate change plans; and a greenhouse gases emissions Trading scheme.

The most important development has been the preparation of the Strategic Plan for the reduction of greenhouse gases, approved in its general terms, by the Council of Ministers in September 2003. The measures included and being gradually in place are:

- Electricity generation - plans for the import of Natural gas, replacement of old Power units, and electricity generation from wind farms.
- Residential – improvement of the thermal behaviour of the buildings, maintenance and/ or replacement of central heating boilers, use of efficient air conditioning systems, use of solar collectors and photovoltaic systems.
- Industry – promotion of co-generation and energy conservation
- Transport – maintenance of vehicles, encouragement of the use of small vehicles, encouragement of the use of public transport.
- Waste management – recycling, methane recovery.

The Authority responsible for the preparation and co-ordination of the Strategic Development Plans, as well as the administration of EU funds, is the Planning Bureau, an independent authority reporting directly to the Government of Cyprus.

## **INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED**

The Council of Ministers has overall responsibility for the formulation of environmental and sustainable development policy. The Environmental policy is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment (MANRE), although the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of the Labour and Social Insurance also play important roles.

Within the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, the unit primarily responsible for environmental issues is the Environment Services (ES). It plays a co-coordinating role, both with other parts of the Ministry and between the Ministry and environmental Institutions in other countries. As well as this co-coordinating role, the Environment Services advise on environmental policy and ensures the implementation of that policy. The service has a wide range of more specific responsibilities in fields such as:

- Environmental impact assessments;
- The laws on water pollution, waste management, nature protection; and
- Environmental awareness and training.

The Environmental Services also acts as the co-coordinator of one of the Environmental Inspectorates in Cyprus. The Environmental Services is also the National Focal Point for a wide range of international conventions and organisations.

## 5. Conclusion

The 'ecological footprint' of Cyprus may be small but it is growing.

The political decision to join the European Union as well as the international obligations of the country presuppose a commitment to safeguard a better balance between human aspirations and long – term environment concerns. The conclusion of the E.U. harmonization process has now set the co-ordinates for the future.

Positive ingredients for success are:

- The political will and commitment of the government,
- The support of sustainability issues by all political parties,
- The representative nature of local authorities;
- The active intervention of civil society, and
- The gradual realization by all, that there is no inherent contradiction between economic development and protection of the environment.

The most important step, however, is setting the mind in the correct direction, by firstly recognizing the dangers ahead, if adjustment measures are not taken and then planning our activities in the direction that previous generations followed, that ***of a symbiotic and balanced relationship with the indigenous environment, in order to sustain ourselves within it.***

Thank you,

**MAIN LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Electrical and electronic waste (No.668/2004)  
Discharge of incineration residues (No.535/2004)  
Environmental noise (No. 224(I)/2004)  
Eco- label (No. 189(I)/2004)  
Greenhouse gases emissions trading (No. 132(I)/2004)  
Environmental Management and Audit (No.122(I)/2004)  
Access to information on the environment (No.119(I)/2004)  
Ratification of the convention for the prevention of sea pollution from ships (Nos. 46(III)/2004, 38(III)/2003, 11(II)/2001, 57/1989)  
Ratification of the convention on Persistent organic pollutants (No. 42(III)/2004)  
Nitrate vulnerable zones (No.42/2004)  
Action plan to protect nitrate vulnerable zones (No.41/2004)  
Ratification of the heavy metals protocol (No. 38(III)/2004)  
Ratification of the convention on transboundary industrial accidents (No.32 (III)/2004)  
Ratification of the convention for civil liability for damages related to the marine transport of hazardous substances (No.21 (III)/2004)  
Protection and management of waters (No.13 (I)/2004)

Discharge of urban waste water (No.772/2003)  
Port reception facilities (No.771/2003)  
Landfill of waste (No.562/2003)  
Noise from equipment used outdoors (No.535/2003)  
Genetically modified organisms (No. 160(I)/2003)  
End of life vehicles (No.157 (I)/2003)  
Protection and management of nature and wildlife (No.153 (I)/2003)  
Protection and management of wild birds and game (No.152 (I)/2003)  
Oil products specifications (No.148 (I)/2003)  
Batteries and accumulators (No.82/2003)  
VOCs from the use of organic solvents (No.73/2003)  
Integrated pollution prevention and control (No.56 (I)/2003)  
Ratification of the Aarhus convention (No. 33(III)/2003)  
Ratification of the Biosafety protocol (No.7 (III)/2003)

Management of used oils (No.637/2002)  
PCBs and PCTs (No.636/2002)  
Nitrates pollution of agricultural origin (No.534/2002)  
Asbestos discharges (No.515/2002)  
Pollution from certain dangerous substances (No.513/2002)  
Shellfish waters (No.512/2002)  
Mercury discharges (Nos.511/2002, 510/2002)  
Cadmium discharges (No.509/2002)  
Hexachlorocyclohexane discharges (No.507/2002)  
Titanium dioxide discharges (No.505/2002)

Code of good agricultural practice (No.407/2002)  
Chemical substances and preparations (No.292/2002)  
Solid and hazardous waste management (No.215 (I)/2002)  
Noise from household equipment (No.192 (I)/2002)  
Air quality (No.188 (I)/2002)  
Atmospheric pollution control (No.187 (I)/2002)  
Heavy metals in packaging and packaging waste (No. 183/2002)  
Ionizing radiation (No. 115(I)/2002)  
Water pollution prevention and control (No.106 (I)/2002)  
Packaging and packaging waste (No.32 (I)/2002)

Prior to 2002, Cyprus had adopted legislation on the Assessment of environmental impacts; Quality objectives for dangerous substances in waters; Quality of bathing waters; Chemicals; Town and country planning; Forest protection; Fisheries and marine environment. The country also ratified the Conventions of Barcelona (Mediterranean), on Migratory species of wild animals, to combat Desertification; Climate change (including the Kyoto protocol); Wetlands; Transboundary environmental impacts; Biological diversity; Transboundary movement of hazardous waste; European wildlife and natural habitats, Trade in endangered species; etc.