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Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States parties
in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant**

List of issues in relation to the sixth periodic report of Cyprus

Addendum

Replies of Cyprus to the list of issues*

[Date received: 11 July 2016]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Abbreviations

AEC	Adult Education Centres
AIU	Aliens and Immigration Unit
AP	Action Plan
CCES	Career Counseling and Education Service
CRMD	Civil Registry and Migration Department
DHTE	Department of Higher and Tertiary Education
DLO	District Labour Office
DLR	Department of Labour Relations
DOL	Department of Labour
DTVE	Department of Technical and Vocational Education
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
ESF	European Social Fund
GMI	Guaranteed Minimum Income
HRDA	Human Resource Development Authority
IRC	Industrial Relations Code
JIU	Joint Inspection Units
KRAC	Kofinou Reception and Accommodation Centre
LDC	Labour Disputes Committee
MAP	Macroeconomic Adjustment Programme
MCGTHB	Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group against Trafficking in Human Beings
MHS	Mental Health Services
MJPO	Ministry of Justice and Public Order
MLWSI	Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
MOC	Ministry of Commerce
MOCW	Ministry of Communication and Works
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MWO	Minimum Wage Order
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPE	National Action Plan for the Elderly

NAPTHB	National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings
NAPYE	National Action Plan for the Youth Employment
NCB	National Certification Body
NCN	National Committee for Nutrition
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NHS	National Health System
NMWR	National Machinery for Women's Rights
NTP	National Tuberculosis Plan
NYG	National Youth Guarantee
OCTHB	Office for the Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings
PES	Public Employment Services
SEP	Social Enterprises Programme
SP	Strategic Plan
SPEWM	Strategic Plan on Equality between Women and Men
SWS	Social Welfare Services
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
WHO	World Health Organization
YES	Young Entrepreneurship Scheme

I. Introduction

1. Following the submission of the Sixth Periodic Report of the Republic in accordance with article 40 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in September 2014 the Human Rights Committee adopted a List of Issues on the Sixth Periodic Report of Cyprus, during its fifty-seventh session (7-11 March 2016).
2. In response to the above List of Issues, the Government submits the following replies, in the light of the consideration of the Sixth Periodic Report, at the 59th session (September 2016) by the Committee.

II. General information

1. **Please provide information on the efforts made to mitigate the adverse impact of the division of the country on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by all individuals, particularly those workers commuting from the Northern part to the Southern part of the country and internally displaced persons.**
 3. The Turkish invasion in 1974 and the continuing military occupation of 34.2% of the territory of the Republic, has resulted in the violation of the human rights of thousands of people, both Greek and Turkish Cypriot. As a result of the continuing foreign occupation, the Government of the Republic is not in a position to apply and, consequently, ensure the implementation of human rights in the whole of its territory. Reliable information and data related to the enjoyment of such rights by the Cypriot citizens living in the areas that are not under the effective control of the Government of the Republic is not available.
 4. The ECHR, in its Judgment of 10th May 2001 on the Fourth Interstate Application of Cyprus v. Turkey, found that Turkey, which has “effective control over the northern Cyprus”, is responsible for securing all human rights under the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and violations of such rights by her own soldiers, or officials, or by the local administration are imputable to her. The responsibilities of the occupying power emanate from international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.
 5. The consistent and continuous violations of human rights in Cyprus by Turkey can also be evidenced by numerous UN and other international bodies’ resolutions and recommendations. Efforts to reunite Cyprus are dependent upon the restoration, inter alia, of fundamental human rights and freedoms of all its lawful citizens, which are an integral part of the negotiations to reach a settlement.
 6. Furthermore, pursuant to Article 1 of Protocol 10 of the Treaty of Accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU, the application of the *aquis communautaire* has been suspended in the occupied areas. Despite this, approximately 100,000 Turkish Cypriots who are in possession of the Republic of Cyprus ID, enjoy their full benefits as citizens of the Republic, which allow them, among others, to move freely, settle, work and study within the EU.
 7. Regarding the crossings, the MOI ensures, through the implementation of the Regulation 866/2004/EU that all EU citizens, including Cypriot citizens, and their family members, can cross simply by establishing their identity.
 8. The PES offer placement in the Government-controlled areas and vocational guidance services to Turkish-Cypriot job-seekers irrespective of whether they live in the Government controlled areas or in the occupied areas, provided they are holders of a

Cyprus identity card. They are offered support in finding an appropriate job position and information about the subsidized employment programmes implemented by the DOL and the training programmes organized by the HRDA. They can apply and participate in these programmes. In the regional PES in Nicosia, there is a Turkish speaking Employment Counsellor. The website of the DOL has information in Greek, English and Turkish.

9. The Social Insurance Scheme compulsorily covers every person gainfully employed in Cyprus either as an employed or a self-employed person, without discrimination. All insured persons have the same rights and obligations.

2. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the direct application of the Covenant provisions in the domestic legal order. Please also provide examples of cases in which the Covenant rights have been invoked before or applied by domestic courts and the number of such cases over the last five years.

10. Nothing new to add. Please refer to the answers to Issues/ Questions submitted by the Government of Cyprus regarding Fourth and Fifth Periodic Report (1998-2007). (Part II- Answers to Comments and Questions – Question 1).

3. Please indicate whether the State party is considering signing and ratifying, or acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

11. The matter is under consideration

4. Please provide information on the steps taken or envisaged to ensure that the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (the Ombudsman) carries out its mandate independently and effectively in accordance with the Paris Principles. Please indicate whether the Office of the Commissioner has a mandate to deal with economic, social and cultural rights. Please also include information, by year, on the budget and the number of staff of this Office from 2009 to 2015.

12. In July 2015, the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights submitted to the UN ICC (International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights) Subcommittee on Accreditation (SCA), an application for accreditation as NHRI under the Paris Principles. The Office has been accredited with B Status.

13. The Commissioner for Administration (Amendment) Law of 2011 (L.158(I)/2011), mandated the Commissioner with specific functions for the promotion and protection of human rights, their preservation or expansion in the Republic and the observance of fundamental principles of human rights by the administration.

14. In particular, the Institution has responsibility through the exercise of its own power to submit opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports which relate to the following areas:

- Any situation of violation of human rights which it decides to take up;
- The national situation with regard to human rights in general and on more specific matters;
- Drawing the attention of the Government to situations in any part of the country where human rights are violated and making proposals to put an end to such situations.

15. As the Law does not define the term “human rights”, this is understood to have a very wide meaning covering the human rights safeguarded by the Constitution of the Republic as well as international and regional human rights instruments ratified by the Republic. Therefore, its mandate covers economic, social and cultural rights.

16. Statistics regarding the budget and staff of the Ombudsman’s Office, for the years 2009-2015, are attached as Appendix I.

5. Please clarify whether legal aid, provided under the Legal Aid Law, is applicable to cases relating to economic, social and cultural rights, and if so, provide information on such cases, including relevant statistical data. Please also provide information on the measures taken or envisaged to expand the legal aid scheme for asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants so as to get legal aid at the early stage of administrative and judicial proceedings.

17. In accordance with the Legal Aid Law (L.165(I)/2002, as amended), legal aid is granted in proceedings before the Courts of Cyprus in, inter alia, civil and criminal proceedings for specific violations of human rights. Pursuant to the Law, human rights violations are considered, amongst others, the violations of the rights provided in by Law 14/1969 which relates to the ratification and implementation of the ICESCR.

18. Concerning the granting of legal aid to asylum seekers, the Legal Aid (Amendment) Law of 2009 [L.132(I)/2009], incorporating Article 15 of EU Directive 2005/85/EC on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status, expanded the legal aid scheme under certain conditions, to refugees and asylum seekers, with respect to court proceedings under Article 146 of the Constitution against a decision rejecting their application for asylum.

19. The Legal Aid (Amendment) Law of 2012 [L.8(I)/2012] expanded the legal aid scheme under certain conditions, so as to cover also judicial proceedings in Cyprus for returning illegally staying third-country nationals in relation to court proceedings under Article 146 of the Constitution against a return decision, a removal decision and a decision on entry ban. The Law is in line with the EU Directive 2008/115/ EC (Article 13, paragraph 4) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals.

20. The Legal Aid (Amendment) Law of 2014 [L.105(I)/2014] provides that free legal aid is provided to applicants for international protection, during the examination of the appeal lodged before the Supreme Court in accordance with Article 146 of the Constitution, as well as to the beneficiaries of international protection in the event of withdrawal or cessation of refugee or subsidiary protection status (as required by article 38.3 of the EU Directive 2005/85/EC).

21. The Legal Aid (Amendment) Law of 2015 [L.20(I)/2015] incorporating the relevant provisions of the EU Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast), concerning the legal aid, provides for legal aid in Court proceedings where the applicant for international protection who is in custody/detention applies for a judicial review (i) of the decision concerning his detention, or (ii) the lawfulness of the duration of his detention (habeas corpus application) [under Article 9(3) of the said Directive].

22. Legal aid includes the preparation of the required procedural documents and participation in the hearing before the Court on behalf of the applicant.

6. Please provide information on the consultation process with civil society in preparation of report to the Committee.

23. The various government Departments consult and or/collaborate from time to time with civil society organizations (in particular specialized entities of civil society) in relation to the exercise of their respective functions concerning better implementation of human rights. More specifically, certain government Services contract with specialised NGOs to carry out certain competences on their behalf on the basis of agreed Protocols.

III. Issues relating to general provisions of the Covenant (arts.1-5)

Article 2(1) – Maximum available resources

7. Please indicate whether the Covenant rights were taken into account when the State party negotiated the macroeconomic adjustment programme with its creditors. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that the macroeconomic adjustment programme, especially the fiscal consolidation strategy, does not disproportionately affect the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights of disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. Please also provide information on the measures taken or envisaged to secure an adequate level of funding to progressively realize economic, social and cultural rights, particularly in the areas of social security, housing, health and education. Please include updated information on the national budget allocated in these areas for 2013-2016.

24. The Government has successfully completed the implementation of the MAP addressing through reforms and measures the identified imbalances in the financial, fiscal and fiscal-structural areas, which have produced positive results. In the real economy, the signs of economic recovery are evident, as positive growth has already been recorded in 2015. Labour market conditions show signs of improvement with the unemployment rate declining to 15% in 2015 from 16.1% of the labour force in 2014.

25. Notwithstanding the financial crisis impacting on the Cyprus economy having a widespread effect on society, unavoidably a diverging impact is witnessed on certain groups of society, the elderly people according to socioeconomic data have had the least financial impact attributed to the fact that pensions provided by the Social Insurance Fund essentially have not been progressively reduced as was the case of pensioners of the public and broader public sector.

26. Based on these evaluations, it seems that the economic effects upon the indicators influencing social data, such as income inequality indicators, the relative poverty and the material deprivation of specific age groups will need more time to decline from then, once these indicators are time lagged second order indicators.

27. Cyprus has implemented a radical welfare reform as part of the MAP, under which the given economic and social circumstances had plenty of merits. The GMI philosophy is based upon providing the minimum financial means to targeted vulnerable households, after a scrutinized means tested procedure, so as eligible households will be in the position to live a decent life combined with conditional active labour market policies promoting retraining and reentry in the labour market thus, containing trends towards poverty trap.

28. The targeted provision of GMI has in many aspects rationalized the welfare system in Cyprus. Based on the Statistical Service of Welfare Benefits Administration Service, GMI beneficiaries for 2015 were 25.508 units, from which 11.679 are new applicants, 10.049 are ex public assistance recipients and 3.780 are ex low pensioners. GMI statistics is

shedding light to another critical aspect on welfare benefits related to the means tested scrutinized procedure that includes immovable property, deposits in banks and income, which has led to a total rejection rate of application of 63% due to the above criteria. Moreover, the total rejection rate of appeals is 60% and the total approval rate of care applications is 30%. The abovementioned data exhibit that GMI has led to significant savings on public finances compared to the previous public assistance scheme. Please refer also to the answer given under Issue 19 below.

29. Concerning adequate funding in the area of social security please refer to the answers given in Article 9 paragraph 57 of the 6th Periodic Report as well as to Attachment II Part C of the Report. Furthermore, in accordance with the results of the actuarial study with reference day 31/12/2011 which were peer reviewed in the Ageing Working Group of the Economic Policy Committee in September 2013, the measures introduced adequately address the issue of the high protected increase in pension spending and secured the long-term financial viability of the pension system up until and through 2060. Finally, in accordance with the most recent actuarial study by the ILO (31/12/2014), the financial sustainability of the pension system is secured at least until 2080.

30. The SP of the MOH for the years 2016-2018 provides equal opportunities for health care to all citizens, irrespective of the socio- economic status and place or residence. Under a specific activity of the 3rd strategic goal of the SP, it is stated that the MOH will continue to develop and implement national programs to target specific, vulnerable and certain age groups, with emphasis given to the completion of the review of Cyprus's capacity to migrants' health issues and other vulnerable groups. Based on the new budget approach (Activity Based Budget) corresponding funds will be allocated into this activity.

31. Since 2013 the MOEC continued the implementation of all measures that were in place during the previous years, to support children in the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights, especially for the disadvantaged and marginalized individuals. All pupils who fell into the schemes of financial assistance were offered free breakfast at school and were exempted from any exam or school leaving certificate fees.

32. In the beginning of 2016, the MOEC undertook the responsibility for students' welfare policy and run the full process of providing assistance to groups of students who face financial difficulties. This reform has simplified the process by incorporating all forms of assistance (students grants, students package) in a single application. Although Cyprus is experiencing a major financial crisis, the total amount of the grants offered to prospective students as well as the scholarships provided through the Cyprus State Scholarship Foundation have not been reduced. The MOEC tries to secure an adequate level of funding for students, by adopting the above measures and also expects to reach the target according to which people, regardless of age, social or economic situation, have the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and improve throughout their lifetime. The MOEC has supported and promoted (along with the MOD and in cooperation with the Open University of Cyprus) another significant reform in this area, giving the opportunity to young people serving in the National Guard to enroll in undergraduate level courses, at no cost.

33. For statistical data regarding the general government expenditure by function see Appendix II.

Article 2(2) – Non-discrimination

8. **Please provide information on the steps taken to review legislation to remove provisions that may have a discriminatory effect on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights of certain individuals and groups and to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, taking into account article 2(2) of the Covenant and the Committee’s general comment No. 20 on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights (2009).**

34. In 2013 the Police jointly with the Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) and Human Rights, agreed on a Police Policy Statement for the prevention, handling and combating of discrimination and racist crime. The Statement emphasizes the development of proactive and deterrent action, victim encouragement, support and protection, and more effective intervention and investigation measures.

35. In accordance with the new policy, Police revised the training curricula and Standing Orders for prevention discrimination, for encouraging and reporting and for ensuring professionalism in investigation procedures in relation to any bias motivation. The Statement restructures, elaborates and improves the previously existing framework based on the Combating of Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by means of Criminal Law [L.134(I)/2011, as amended] by which the racial motive, is criminalized.

36. In addition, the Criminal Code (Amendment) Law of 2015 [L.87(I)/2015], criminalizes public incitement to violence and hatred against a group of people or a member of such a group on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

9. **Please provide information on the measures, legislative and policy, taken to combat de jure and de facto discrimination faced by non-EU nationals and members of ethnic and national minorities, in attaining Cypriot citizenship and accessing employment, social security, health services and education.**

37. In accordance with the Civil Registry Law [L.141(I)/2002, as amended], all persons fulfilling certain criteria, including the years of residence, are eligible for acquiring citizenship. There is no discrimination in relation to any group of people. Furthermore, as of June 2015, the requirement for a residency period for recognized refugees to be eligible to apply for nationality, has been fixed to 5 years, which is the same period as that required for spouses of Cypriot citizens, EU citizens and their families.

38. The equal treatment of migrants in employment is ensured by the contract of employment which includes the same terms and conditions that apply to domestic labour force. The gross salary is based on collective agreements so as to safeguard equal pay. The contract of employment must be checked and stamped by the DLOs and upon the arrival of the migrant in Cyprus signed by both parties. The MLWSI, within its effort to inform migrants about the terms and conditions of employment used in the broad sector of agriculture, has translated the contracts into languages other than English, such as Sri Lankan, Chinese and Arabic. The agriculture sector concentrates a large percentage of the employed migrants. Furthermore, an established procedure for the examination of complaints against the violation of terms and conditions of the employment of migrants is in place to protect the rights of migrants being employed in Cyprus.

39. Additionally, the DOL issued informative leaflets in various languages containing accurate information on employment related issues, such as, the provisions of labour legislation, terms of employment, equality in employment, termination of employment and the rights and responsibilities of a migrant in general.

40. Various policies have been adopted to target services or entitlements towards vulnerable groups, such as, extending exemptions from user fees. For instance, as from August 1, 2013 new legislation came into force regarding the provision of health care in public hospitals. Asylum seekers and political refugees are entitled to reduced-fee access and use of the public health system.

41. The NAP 2010-2012 for promoting the social inclusion of immigrants, sets health as one of its priorities. It includes the treatment for life-threatening conditions and contagious diseases (e.g. HIV, Hepatitis B and C, Syphilis and Tuberculosis) and safeguards access to immunization services provided by the public sector, free of charge. Special provisions have also recently been introduced to ensure the immediate access to health care services for children of illegal immigrants and refugees.

42. The MOEC gives great emphasis on ensuring equal access to education for all children living on the island, without any discrimination. Compulsory education is provided by the Government free of charge to everyone, irrespective of the residential status of the pupils' parents. Furthermore, the CCES through its school counselors offers guidance and counseling services mainly to pupils of secondary education as well as to the general public with different nationalities and ethnic background.

43. A significant reform promoted during the period under review, is that certain courses at the public universities will be offered in the English language in order to be more accessible to non-natives. Moreover, another major reform (November 2015), is the establishment of the Quality Assurance Agency in higher education. The Agency has taken over the tasks and responsibilities of (a) the Educational Evaluation and Accreditation Council, (b) the Committee Evaluating Private Universities and (c) the Advisory Commission of Tertiary Education. It is expected that the operation of the new Agency will increase the quality of higher education in Cyprus.

44. An innovation approved by the Council of Ministers is the proposal for an alternative way of admission to public universities in Cyprus. The new system was formed after consultation and agreement between the MOEC, the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology. This reform meets the current requirements of the educational system, since it was a demand of pupils and parents of private schools for years. The proposed regulation provides a new alternative procedure, so that graduates from private schools can have access to public universities, through international examinations, among others. The regulation is pending before the Parliament for enactment.

10. Please provide information on the steps taken to grant similar rights and entitlements to both refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, including family reunification, and access to employment, social assistance programmes and health services. Please also provide information on the steps taken to ensure that asylum-seekers who have a pending judicial recourse at the Supreme Court are not subject to detention for deportation purpose. Please also indicate any measure taken to facilitate the integration of persons with refugee status into the society.

45. Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection enjoy the same rights under the Refugee Law [L.6(I)/2000, as amended] as regards employment, social assistance programmes and health services.

46. In accordance with the Refugee (Amendment) Law of 2014 [L.59(I)/2014], beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have, as in the case of recognized refugees, immediate access to employment upon the date they are granted the aforesaid status and there are no restrictions regarding their employment in any sector in the labour market. This class of persons is provided with assistance and support by the PES, in finding appropriate employment, after registration at the District Labour Office of the area where they reside.

47. Moreover, unemployed refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection or other groups of migrants with free access to employment also have access to training programs through individualized counseling and reference made by the PES, while employed migrants can participate in training programs for employees, as long as they satisfy the specific criteria of the individual programme.

48. Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection may submit an application for the GMI, which was established with the aim to ensure a socially acceptable minimum standard of living for persons (and families) legally residing in the Republic, whose income and other economic resources are insufficient to meet their basic and special needs. The requirement of legal and continuous residence in the areas under the effective control of the Government for five years before the submission of the application, is not applicable to refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

49. For third-country nationals and EU nationals, the status of residence has to be verified in accordance with national law (e.g possession of a work permit). For more details regarding the GMI please refer also to the relevant part of the answer given under Issue 7 above and to the answer given under Issue 19 below.

50. With regards to the right for family reunification which is currently enjoyed only by refugees, the relevant EU Directive allowed the member States not to apply the right to family reunification to persons with subsidiary protection status. The MOI may grant the right to family reunification, in special circumstances on a case by case basis, to persons with subsidiary protection status.

51. The issue of effective remedy has been taken care by the 8th amendment to the Constitution of Cyprus, which came into force on 21.7.2015, and granted competence to the Administrative Court, in proceedings relating to international protection pursuant to European Union Law to look into the substance of the administrative decision and amend or substitute it accordingly. This competence is exercised by the new Administrative Court established by the Establishment and Functioning of the Administrative Court Law [L.131(I)/2015].

52. In accordance with the Protection of Patients' Rights Law [L.1/2005, as amended], all patients have the right to healthcare services regardless ethnicity, sex, or beliefs. Furthermore, illegal migrants and asylum seekers are still granted full medical coverage. For the effective implementation of patients' rights the law provides for monitoring mechanisms (Complaints Officers in each state hospital and Complaints Committees in every District covering appeals concerning state hospitals and all private sector). Please refer also to the relevant part of the answer given under Issue 26.

Equal rights of men and women

11. Please provide information on the measures taken to address the large gender disparities in income and labour market participation. Please also provide information on the steps taken to increase the number of women at decision-making levels in both the public and private sector, including in Parliament.

53. According to Eurostat's official data, the gender pay gap in Cyprus further declined to 15.4% in 2014, compared to 15.8% in 2013, 16.2% in 2012 and 16.4% in 2011. The Government is aware that, bridging the gender pay gap is a gradual and complex process, and that no legislative framework is adequate unless combined with comprehensive and targeted measures.

54. The MLWSI, implemented the co-financed, by the ESF, Project “Actions for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap” which started in July 2010 and was concluded in December 2015. The project had more than 10 innovative actions.
55. Through the actions of the above mentioned project Officers and Inspectors of the DLR and the DOL, of the MLWSI, received intensive theoretical information and on-the-job training on the enforcement of equal pay and equal treatment in employment legislation. Two officers of the Ombudsman’s Office also participated in the said project.
56. Having in mind that the gender pay gap can also be attributed to other stereotypes, including cultural and occupational segregation, 8.612 primary and secondary education teachers, 143 career (high school) counselors and 3.268 parents received training in this area, in an effort to change perceptions leading to the diversification of women’s’ academic and professional choices.
57. Training programs were also implemented for members of trade unions and associations of employers as well as for members of professional associations regarding the promotion of equal pay during collective bargaining.
58. In April 2014, by a decision of the Council of Ministers, the NCB was established in order to evaluate enterprises as regards the incorporation, and/or the implementation of best practices relating to equal treatment and/or the implementation of best practices relating to equal treatment and/or equal pay principles in their working environment. Thirty four (34) companies were certified in 2015, whilst the NCB will continue to evaluate companies/organizations interested in acquiring certification as Equality Employers or Employees that apply Good Practices, despite the conclusion of the project.
59. In order to generate publicity on the problems created by the gender pay gap, it was decided, under the Project, to create a celebratory Equal Pay Day, which will continue to be celebrated annually after the conclusion of the Project. The date is not fixed, but it is calculated annually on the basis of the level of the gender pay gap. For example, in 2016, it is expected to be celebrated in mid-November, which will be the time that male workers would have received the level of income that women will require to work till the end of the given year.
60. Finally, Cyprus recognizes that a very important element to eliminate inequalities in payment is the use of job evaluation systems. In this area, officers and inspectors of the DLR were trained by job evaluation experts on how to perform a job evaluation using the criteria defined by the relevant legislation. Job evaluation procedures were also incorporated in a manual created and funded by the Project, and this manual was presented to employers by business consultants appointed by the DLR.
61. Labour market participation is further promoted with additional protection offered to pregnant workers with the Maternity Protection (Amendment) Law of 2015 (L.175(I)/2015). The Law provides for additional maternity in cases of multiple births (twins, triplets, quadruplets, etc.) with an additional 4 weeks of maternity leave for each child (added to the total of 18 weeks normally provided).
62. The balanced participation of women and men in decision-making positions in public and political life has remained a priority for the NMWR, in line with the SPEWM 2014-2017 which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2014.
63. The NMWR, through its Subcommittee on the Participation of Women in decision-making positions, in view of the parliamentary elections of 2016, launched a campaign, with the broad participation of women’s organizations, in an effort to give visibility to women’s issues and women candidates, especially during the pre-election period.

64. More specifically, the NMWR prepared and published an awareness-raising flyer, urging citizens to vote both genders, as well as a booklet for women in 2016 parliamentary elections (including short CVs of women candidates), which was widely distributed.

65. Therefore the result of the Parliamentary Elections of May 2016 was that the percentage of women members of Parliament has increased from 12.5% in 2011 (7/56) to 17.85% in 2016 (10/56).

IV. Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (Arts.6-15)

Article 6 – The right to work

- 12. Please provide information on the effectiveness of the measures taken to tackle the high level of youth unemployment, as indicated in the State party report (attachment 1). Please also provide information on the measures taken to reduce the number of the long-term unemployed as well as of workers in precarious employment.**

66. In order to address the high unemployment rates among youth, Cyprus is currently implementing the NAPYE. This 3 year plan calls for the deployment of a national strategy that combines measures targeting young individuals aged 15 to 29 that face multiple barriers to labour market integration and are exposed to longer unemployment spells, with an early intervention approach. The NAP has a total budget of €47.2 min.

67. The NAPYE was drafted based on the preliminary study conducted by the ILO on the Cyprus labour market. The study showed the existence of cultural problems in the proper functioning of the labour market in Cyprus which cannot be solved in the short term. The NAPYE includes measures for resolving these structural problem on a longer-term basis. Strategic interventions for the years 2015-2017 are as follows:

- The restructuring of the system of technical and vocational education with a view to making it more attractive among young people as a career path and as important as general education;
- Strengthening of the PES to enable it to perform effectively its role as Coordinator for the Youth Guarantee, being also the most important contributor to this effort;
- The role of lifelong career orientation should be upgraded with efforts starting from the earliest school years and extended throughout the person's life;
- The modernization of the system of apprenticeship and traineeships in enterprises, on the basis of the Cyprus economic reality.

68. For measures covered under the NAPYE for the years 2015-2017 see Appendix III.

Article 7 – The right to just and favourable conditions of work

- 13. Please provide information on the measures taken to expand the coverage of the minimum wage and to ensure the full compliance with the minimum wage by employers. Please also provide information on the steps taken to ensure that the minimum wage, which has remained unchanged since 2013, provides a decent living to workers and their families.**

69. The MWO, has remained unchanged throughout the crisis period, despite wages and terms and conditions of employment governed by collective agreements having faced reductions to restore competitiveness and reduce lay-offs.

70. Additionally, prior to 2012, the MWO had been extended to include more professions, adding Security Guards in 2008 (hourly rate of €4.90 on appointment and €5.20 after six months employment), and then adding employees with cleaning duties in 2010 (hourly rate of €4,55 on appointment and €4,84).

71. Adherence to the provisions of the MWO is a matter dealt with by continuous inspections undertaken by Inspectors of the DLR. 2.900 inspections concerning the minimum wage were undertaken in 2014, with further inspections undertaken in 2015. As a result of these inspections, 35 cases of non-abidance were forwarded to the competent Court in 2014, and a further 29 were taken to Court in 2015. Many cases of non-abidance are dealt with directly and resolved, without the need to resort to Court proceedings.

14. In light of the large number of workers who are not protected through collective bargaining agreements, please provide information on the measures, legislative or policy, taken to protect the right of those workers to just and favourable conditions of work, particularly in terms of fair remuneration, safe and healthy working conditions, equal opportunities in employment, rest and leisure and working hours, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 23 on the right to just and favourable conditions of work (2016).

72. More than 45% of employees are covered by the provisions of collective agreements. Although this percentage is the result of a declining trend, it still remains comparatively high.

73. Industrial relations in Cyprus are based on a voluntary system, strongly dependent on tripartism. Tripartism, voluntarism and social dialogue have been the basis for forming and implementing social and economic policy, and, to this day, are considered to be the backbone of the successful industrial relations system. The system has been modeled on the fundamental principles laid down by the provisions of relevant ILO Conventions and Recommendations, with a special emphasis on the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

74. With a view to the true voluntary nature of the system, legislation governing industrial relations is minimal. Social partners are directly involved in wage setting through collective bargaining on the basis of the provisions of the IRC. The IRC, signed in 1977, is, in essence, a gentlemen's agreement and governs the behavior of the social partners as regards collective bargaining and labour dispute resolution procedures, in the private and semi-government sectors.

75. All employees, whether covered by the provisions of collective agreements or not, are still fully protected by the application of labour legislation. For this reason, the MLWSI constantly strives for the improvement of labour inspection mechanisms through training, risk assessment and analysis and the establishment of JIU in 2009, in order to inspect cases of illegal and undeclared work.

76. The DLR and the JIU, carry out labour inspections on a regular basis, across a multitude of businesses and establishments, in varied sectors of economic activity so as to safeguard compliance with labour legislation.

77. Legislation is in force in relation to the working hours of employees [The Organisation of Working Time Law of 2002 (L.63(I)/2002, as amended], the payment of wages on a weekly or monthly basis [The Protection of Wages Law of 2007 (L.35(I)/2007, as amended], equal payment between men and women [The Equal Pay between Men and

Women for the Same Work or for Work to Which Equal Value is Attributed Law of 2002 (L.177(I)/2002, as amended], etc. The terms and conditions (working hours, overtime payment, holidays, etc.) of hotel and catering employees are governed by the provisions of the Hotel Employees (Conditions of Service) Regulations of 1972 to 2016 (P.I 126/2016) and the Catering Employees (Conditions of Service) Law [L.80/1968, as amended]. Finally, the Regulation of the Operation of Shops and Employment Terms of their Employees Law of 2006 [L.155(I)/2006, as amended] regulates issues relating to the maximum standards of the employment terms of their employees (minimum wage, maximum working hours, holidays, overtime payment, etc).

15. Please provide information on the result of inspections on equal pay legislation, which has carried out under the project “Action for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap” for 2010-2015.

78. Within the project “Actions for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap”, which was co-financed by the ESF, Officers and Inspectors of the DLR and the DOL, of the MLWSI, as well as Officers of the Ombudsman’s Office received intensive theoretical, as well as on-the-job training in the enforcement of equal pay and equal treatment in employment legislation.

79. Following the above, a total of 1095 inspections on equal pay legislation were undertaken in 2015, with no violations of the law witnessed.

16. Please provide information on labour inspections on the working conditions of migrant workers, particularly non-EU national migrant workers in farming and domestic settings, and indicate the main issues identified and the measures taken to address them. Please also provide information on the complaints brought by migrant workers, including the number of complaints filed and their outcome. Please further provide information on the situation of undocumented migrant workers and the measures taken to protect them from discrimination and labour exploitation, including the implementation of the Aliens and Immigration (Amendment) Law (L.100(I)/2012).

80. The DLR of the MLWSI continuously enhances its efforts for improving the working conditions of foreign workers as these are prescribed in the contract of employment, signed by both parties, soon after their arrival to Cyprus. The contract of employment specifies, among others, working hours, annual leave, paid public holidays, etc.

81. Terms of employment of foreign workers in the areas of farming, agriculture, industry and commerce are those provided for in collective agreements, in order to safeguard equal treatment between all workers in Cyprus.

82. The complaints mechanism is an established procedure undertaken by the DLR, regarding the examination of complaints from employees from third countries. The Department, after examining the complaint and following meetings with both sides, proceeds with a report regarding any violations of the complainant’s employment contract to the LDC, under the auspices of the MOI. The LDC is presided over by the Director of CRMD of the MOI, with members from the DLR, of the MLWSI, and the AIU of the Police.

83. Based on data from the DLR, 558 complaints were filed from workers from third countries in 2015. 97 cases concerned workers in the agriculture and animal farming sectors, and 461 cases concern domestic workers. 320 complaints were solved by signing a release agreement giving the workers the opportunity to seek employment at a different employer in Cyprus, 31 cases resulted in the voluntary return of the worker to their

employer, 23 cases resulted in the employees choosing to return to their country of origin, and 184 cases were sent to the LDC of the MOI as the competent authority for final decision. From the 184 cases the decision of the Committee was for 80 cases to return to their country of origin, and for 104 to offer them the opportunity to seek employment with a new employer.

84. Apart from undertaking inspections regarding undeclared and illegal work, the JIU (Refer also to the answer given under Issue 14 above), also undertake inspections that pertain to examining the status and terms and conditions of employment of third country employees. To this effect the MLWSI proceeded with the appointment of 30 inspectors.

- 17. Please provide information on the steps taken to provide asylum seekers with employment opportunities that are compatible with their educational and professional qualifications, including the implementation of the Equality Authority's decision in this regard.**

85. Asylum seekers are assisted in finding employment in certain sectors of the labour market (determined by a Council of Ministers' Decree) by the PES.

- 18. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure workers in the informal economy enjoy just and favourable conditions of work.**

86. As referred in the answer under Issue 14 of Article 7 above, the JIU, carry out labour inspections on a regular basis, across a multitude of businesses and establishments, in varied sectors of economic activity so as to safeguard compliance with labour laws. The inspections carried out by the JIU are geared towards ensuring that illegal and undeclared work is effectively dealt with, thus ensuring that workers in the informal economy are essentially repositioned within the formal system, leading to the provision of just and favourable conditions of work.

Article 9 – The right to social security

- 19. Please provide information on the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) introduced in 2014, including its coverage and eligibility, particularly regarding homeless persons and undocumented migrants, as well as its adequacy in amount and duration of the scheme, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 19 on the right to social security (E/C.12/GC/19). Please share your experience in implementing the GMI, including the effect of GMI on beneficiaries, particularly those who rely primarily on social benefits, as well as the challenges in implementing the GMI and the measures to address them.**

87. The GMI was established in July 2014 with the aim to ensure a socially acceptable minimum standard of living for persons (and families) legally residing in the Republic whose income and other economic resources are insufficient to meet their basic and special needs. The new GMI will replace the existing public assistance programme. The nature of the benefit is differential in that it varies according to the applicant's income and family structure.

88. The minimum living cost was calculated on the basis of a revised consumption basket and includes:

- Basic needs based on a revised consumption basket;
- A rent allowance or mortgage interest allowance, depending on whether the eligible applicant pays rent or mortgage on a loan for acquiring the family residence;
- Municipal or similar taxes allowance;

- Allowance in case of extraordinary needs.

89. Beneficiary is any individual and his/her family dependents legally residing in the Republic for the last 5 years (duration of stay does not apply in the case of recognized refugees and victims of THB) and meeting specific financial and other criteria.

90. The monthly GMI provided to beneficiaries is the difference between the minimum subsistence basket (basic needs) and the total monthly income of the household.

The basic amounts of GMI are as follows:

- €480 for the head of the household;
- €240 for every dependent person over 14;
- €144 for every dependent person under 14.

Supplementary allowances include:

- Rent and house loan;
- Subsidies for municipality and other taxes (no specified amount).

91. The housing allowance (rent or mortgage interest) is determined on the basis of the number of the members of a family and the geographical district in which the family resides, as well as the rent prices which were calculated in cooperation with the Royal Institute of Land Surveyors and were endorsed from the Department of Lands and Surveys.

92. The amount of the allowance for mortgage interest cannot exceed the amount which is calculated for GMI purposes, taking into account the parameters mentioned above.

Yearly cost of the programme

- 2014: €2.048.202, 51;
- 2015: €65.438.767, 07 plus €9.797.107, 20 Christmas benefit (December 2015).

93. The Social Impact Assessment which was undertaken as a part of introducing the GMI showed that the AROP, as well as, the poverty gap is estimated to decrease by 3,2% and 16,8%, respectively.

94. Furthermore, the introduction of GMI is expected to reduce significantly the absolute poverty rates by 70%. The risk of poverty rate for elderly (65+) had been reduced from 29,3% in 2012, to 20,1 in 2013, but slightly increased to 22,4% in 2014.

95. Regarding the introduction of the GMI and the readjustment of welfare benefits accordingly, a social impact assessment has been carried out prior to any decisions (2013-2014). According to the various decision parameter inputs and the relevant outputs of the models, the optimal solutions were chosen so as to mainly eliminate and/or reduce the number of people living in absolute poverty, reduce the poverty gap focusing on the most vulnerable, and lift a number of households above the relevant poverty threshold, while maintaining near neutral budget for welfare during the adjustment period.

96. After running various sets of decision parameters, the final GMI and welfare design chosen, had significant effects in the desired outcomes while remaining nearly budget neutral. More specifically, the incidence of poverty (share of poor in the general population) was predicted to decrease by 3,2% with more emphasis on vulnerable groups, while the intensity of poverty (the distance between the income of the poor and the relative poverty threshold) was predicted to decrease by 16,8%, with decreased up to 32,7% for the most vulnerable groups. Finally, the most significant effect was measured on the number of

households living under the absolute poverty threshold, where a reduction of 70% was predicted. Refer also to the answer given under Issue 7 above.

97. There are no homeless persons in the Government – controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus. When exceptional situations occur, these are reported to the SWS and immediate action is taken to provide the means and necessary financial assistance for appropriate housing.

Article 10 – Protection of the family, mothers and children

20. Please provide information on the result of the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Elderly (2005-2009) as well as on the effectiveness of other policies aiming at protecting older persons.

98. The NAPE extended its chronological coverage to 2015. The MLWSI has initiated the compilation of a new NAPE for the period 2016-2020. It is expected to be completed before the end of 2016.

99. There was no external/official evaluation of the NAPE 2005-2015. Measures for the protection of the elderly during the period 2005-2015 are:

- Introduction of the GMI: Please refer to the answer given under Issue 19 of the Responses to the List of Issues.
- GMI and Social Benefits in General (Emergencies and Need for Care) Decree of 2014-2015: With the introduction of the GMI, a decree which provides for the subsidization of social care was issued.
- Scheme supporting pensioners' households with low income: It begun in 2009 and will gradually be incorporated to the GMI. It involves the provision of a cash benefit to pensioners' households whose total annual income is below the poverty threshold [(which is set at 60% of the national median equalized disposable income (after social transfers)].
- Several healthcare reforms have been undertaken including the expansion of home nursing and mental health nursing.

21. Please provide information on the effectiveness of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for 2013-2015, including the major achievements and challenges to overcome. Please also provide updated information on the number of cases of human trafficking, number of convictions and sanctions imposed on perpetrators in 2014-2015, including those in which public officials are involved. Please include the information on the progress made in terms of a centralized data collection system on the cases of human trafficking.

100. The NAPTHB of 2013-2015 is still under evaluation, scheduled to be completed in the second part of 2016. Actions that are ongoing or have not been implemented by the end of 2015, were transferred to the draft NAPTHB for 2016-2018. The new NAPTHB is pending for approval by the MCGTHB for the addressing of THB and exploitation of persons. The National Coordinator on combating of THB is the MOI.

101. The Police is running its own data collection program, which breaks down categories in detail. The centralized data collection system, which has been developed under an EU co-funded program and in which Cyprus was a partner (the MoSy program), will be installed at the MOI and other selected competent authorities as soon as Cyprus receives the necessary technical assistance by the leader organization (the Portuguese) and subsequently by the company that has developed it. The required servers have been

acquired and the IT department of the MOI is waiting for the aforementioned company to proceed with the technical assistance.

102. The Cyprus Police has involvement in several actions of the NAPTHB. The actions are ongoing and the Police have an active role in the education and awareness-raising on issues of THB. Specific efforts are also made to organize joint training sessions of professionals from different backgrounds with the aim of building and sustaining effective teams against THB. These multi-task group trainings help the participants understand each other's responsibilities and roles, increase their competencies and efficiency and help create synergies. Multi-task group trainings included government officers who act as first responders in THB cases. Such trainings were provided to SWS Officers, Psychologists of MHS, the Police, Prosecutors, CRMD Officers, Labour Officers, Labour Inspection Officers, medical staff, and to the members of the Local Authorities.

103. Concerning the actions solely on the behalf of the Police, such as, the assessment and the improvement of the investigation phase of THB cases, the OCTHB has been reinforced with specialized and expert investigations who handle and investigate all cases of THB.

Article 11 – The right to an adequate standard of living

- 22. Please provide information on the measures taken to reduce poverty rate, particularly in light of the freeze of minimum wages and decreases in public spending, particularly on the social security sector over the past years. Please provide updated information on the at-risk-of-poverty rate before and after social transfers in the past four years.**

104. Please refer to the answers given under Article 9 of the Sixth Periodic Report (paras. 53-60). In addition, in preparing the package of the measures, as a result of the negotiations of the MOI with the Troika, the Government took under serious consideration their impact to the contributors as well as to the beneficiaries. As a result of the measures agreed with the Troika provided for the gradual increase of the contributions (every five years) alongside with the gradual increase of the qualifying conditions for old age pension. The beneficiaries were not affected. The level of pensions would have been the same during the period 2013-2016 even without the introduction of the freeze of pensions as the wage index and the CPI on which pensions are adjusted each year, decreased during this period.

- 23. Please provide information on the measures taken to improve conditions of housing and to provide more housing units to disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups.**

105. Please refer to the answer given under Article 11 of the Sixth Periodic Report (paras. 127-132). In addition: (1) According to the Self-Housing Scheme, eligible applicants are considered those that are displaced persons and meet the income criteria, provided that they do not own another housing unit (or owned such a unit in the past). The amount of the aid is determined by the applicant's income and the size of his family; (2) Purchase of Apartment/House Scheme: Eligible applicants are considered those that are displaced persons and meet the income criteria, provided that they do not own another housing unit (or owned such in the past). The amount of the aid is determined by the applicant's income and the size of his family. The aid criteria for purchasing a housing unit and or/building a house appear in Appendix IV; (3) Rent Subsidy: Eligible applicants are considered those that are displaced persons and meet the income criteria, provided that they do not own another housing unit (or owned such a unit in the past). The amount of the aid is determined by the applicant's income and the size of his family; (4) Scheme for the subdivision of land into plots and their disposal to families with lower income and young couples: This scheme seeks to support families with lower income so that they may have

satisfactory private housing units as less as possible limitations regarding the place of settlement. The last review of the Scheme was approved by the Council of Ministers on 21/7/2010. Due to the decreased available credits foreseen in the budget for the implementation of the housing schemes provided by the MOI and addressed to the whole population, at present, all approvals for new subdivisions of land for families with lower income have been suspended; (5) Scheme for the Protection of the Main Residence: It is suitable for individuals who (a) have acquired a home loan with a mortgage over their main (permanent) residence or, (b) have acquired a business loan for funding a small business with mortgage over their main (permanent) residence or that of their spouse.

106. The scheme concerns home loans offered to cover the construction or purchase of the applicant's main residence as well as business loans for the growth of a business with mortgage over the main residence of the applicant or that of their spouse. Payables including but not limited to current account payables, credit card debt, investment and consumer loans, tax debts, social security payables, private debt and fines including payables to municipalities cannot be covered by the scheme. The scheme concerns groups of the population that belong to a specific and predetermined income and assets range. Beneficiaries of the scheme will be determined according to strict income and asset criteria, such as, their yearly income:

- Families with no children: €22.000
- Each additional child: €2.000
- One parent families: €20.000
- Each additional child: €2.000
- Families consisting person(s) with disability: €33.000
- Singleton: €13.000
- Singleton with disability: €21.500

24. Please also provide information on the measures taken to improve living conditions of the Kofinou Reception Centre and the services provided to the residents as public transportation, social and psychological counseling, healthcare and vocational training.

107. The KRAC has expanded its capacity from 70 to 400 beds. Although the Centre is located in a rural area, it is very close to the three main cities (Larnaca, Nicosia and Limassol) and it is only 3 kilometres away from the village of Kofinou. At the moment, the Center operates almost in full capacity. Apart from the main services (accommodation, provision of 3 ready meals daily and clothing, monthly allowance), the Centre has its own medical office with nursing staff 24/7 and a doctor twice a week. The applicants accommodated at the Centre, may visit the Medical Centre of Kofinou village as well as Larnaka hospital. Furthermore, english and greek classes are provided at the Centre. Free transportation is also provided both by the public transport (all residents are provided with a monthly bus ticket for Larnaca District and, when the need arises, a ticket for any visit to a Government Service in any District) but also with the use of a taxi in case of emergency. With regards to measures for increasing safety, a guard is present at the entrance on a 24hour basis since October 2015.

108. As of 31/3/2016, the staff at the Centre also includes 3 social workers providing services to the residents on an everyday basis as well as an administrative officer. The Asylum Service is in the process of reinforcing the management structure and staffing of the Centre by signing new contracts (long term) with the private sector. This will lead to the significant improvement of the Centre's operation.

109. Regarding the measures taken for the people living in the KRAC, the AEC have offered free of charge language lessons in English and in Greek. On average 80 participants attended and initially, during the school year 2015-2016, five groups were formed for English and three for Greek, which were reduced after Christmas by one in each category. As far as vocational training is concerned, the residents of the Centre can enroll to any course that is offered by the DTVE, provided that they are capable of attending.

- 25. Please explain the increased number of evictions carried out over the past years, including the main causes of evictions, as well as the affected individuals and groups. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that the evictions are carried out in accordance with relevant domestic laws and international human rights standards.**

110. The ICESCR as such has not been invoked before the Rent Control Courts and the occasion has never arisen for the said Courts to apply it in cases before pending before them. This is due to the fact that the economic, social, and cultural rights provided therein are also safeguarded by the Constitution of Cyprus which is the supreme law of the land. Thus, litigants consider that they are sufficiently covered by invoking constitutional provisions.

111. The number of evictions recorded in the data kept by the Registries of the Rent Control Courts in all the districts of the island, have more or less remained in the same bracket in the last five years. There are yearly fluctuations, sometimes upwardly and sometimes downwardly. The Rent Control Court considers that the number of cases before it is directly affected by the state of the economy. Evictions concern both premises used for housing purposes and premises used for work purposes. The ground of eviction in the vast majority of cases is arrears of rent. This ground of eviction concerns both natural and legal persons, for both domestic and work premises.

112. The Government has safeguards in place to ensure protection and assistance is given to vulnerable groups, including monetary assistance for the payment of rent for housing accommodation. Such measures fall outside the ambit of the Court's jurisdiction but the Court takes note of them.

Article 12 – The right to physical and mental health

- 26. Please provide information on the efforts made to strengthen the public health care services, including regarding allocation of public funding, the coverage of the public health insurance, the range of public healthcare services and the number of medical professionals in the public sector. Please also provide information on the implementation of the new National Health System in this regard. Please specify the steps taken to monitor and regulate the private sector primary health-care service providers.**

113. Regarding the NHS, Cyprus is trying to move now to a comprehensive system of universal coverage with better benefits, more effective financing mechanisms, cooperation between the public and private sectors, and reorganization and computerization of all public hospitals. The proposed NHS is an insurance-based system which has been designed to address the current challenges, distortions and deadlocks in the healthcare sector.

114. The NHS will be developed and implemented based on the fundamental principles of free choice of provider, social equality and solidarity, financial sustainability and universal coverage.

115. All citizens of the Republic who have their permanent residence in Cyprus and all persons who are contributors and have their permanent residence in Cyprus or are

contributors and legally reside in Cyprus, will be entitled of coverage by the NHS system. Additionally, Cyprus provides free medical care to all children and pregnant women in Cyprus, irrespective of their status, as well as to victims of THB and exploitation and asylum seekers.

116. The main principles and characteristics of the NHS are set out in Appendix V.

27. Please provide information on the national tuberculosis elimination plan and the measures taken to address the disproportionately high cases of tuberculosis found among persons of foreign origin, particularly migrants.

117. The MOH has an integrated policy regarding tuberculosis. As for migrants, monitoring mechanisms are already in place and migrants which suffer from the disease are treated free of charge in a supportive environment (Kyperounda Rural Hospital).

118. A NTP is in the process to be developed (through an intersectoral synergy) by the beginning of 2017. In this plan, programmes that are strengthen multisectoral partnerships which additionally address migrants' vulnerability to NTB, are included.

28. Please provide information on the measures taken to address the high level of smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and obesity.

119. With regards to high levels of smoking, Cyprus has set up a National Committee for the control of smoking with participation of governmental representatives and NGOs. The Committee has formulated a national strategy, aiming to control the smoking epidemic focusing on three goals: smoking prevention, smoking cessation treatment, and legislation.

120. In terms of smoking prevention measures, in collaboration with the Cyprus Anti-Drug Council, NGOs and health visitors in schools, there are school-based information days on the detrimental effects of smoking as well as experiential in-class activities organized from primary school years. The MOEC has recently banned smoking in all school property and has declared both in-door and out-doors school areas as "smoke free areas".

121. Cyprus operates smoking cessation clinics in all the main cities. The programs are offered free of charge through the MHS while additional programs are offered through NGOs in collaboration with MHS. The programs use a combined approach offering individual or group counseling for smoking cessation with the option of using a nicotine replacement treatment.

122. Cyprus has adopted legislation regarding bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship but the effect of the ban depends on the level of compliance with the law. In view of this, a new law is currently being pursued that will significantly increase the monetary fines where smoking ban is not adhered to. In addition, the proposed legislation provides that smoking packets may only be sold in packs of 20s (so that it is more difficult for children to buy single cigarettes) and that the packs will portray pictorial warnings.

Overview of Cyprus' National Strategy on alcohol and illicit substances

123. The National Strategy for combating dependence on illicit substances and the harmful use of alcohol 2013-2020, comprises the basic policy document for substance dependence and provides guidance for the government's actions and initiatives for the next eight years. The new strategy adopts a comprehensive and global policy approach, which succeeds the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2012, aiming to shape the existing framework, provide policy guidance and thus coordinate local agencies in carrying out actions in the field of addictions, for licit and illicit substances. Moreover, the Strategy aims to reinforce, strengthen and expand international partnerships. Therefore, the policy promotes measures

and interventions based on scientifically proven practices that utilize human and financial resources in an effective manner.

124. The Strategy is structured around two policy areas; demand reduction and supply reduction, promoting actions that reflect the needs of the country through the five basic areas of intervention, including Prevention, Treatment and Social Reintegration, Harm Reduction, Supply Control and Regulation, and International Cooperation, and three cross-cutting themes: (1) Coordination; (2) International cooperation and (c) Research, information, monitoring and evaluation.

125. The alcohol related actions by Pillar for the AP 2013-2016 – For additional actions implemented see Appendix VI.

Obesity

126. The MOH works closely with the WHO and the EU, taking part in the high level Group for Nutrition and the Obesity Platform. A clinical dietician represents the focal person and also the liaison with all other authorities, including local ministries for the various subjects of nutrition. She also coordinates all nutrition preventive programs and Policies (A NCN was activated in 1998 and includes all major ministries and organizations relevant to the nutrition policy).

127. Nutrition programs start from the school age and are promoted through School Health Services. Somatometric measures are performed regularly and overweight children are referred to dieticians. The Nutrition AP 2007-2012 was completed successfully, the proposed actions are continuously implemented and a new AP is in the process to be developed.

128. In 2014 National Guidelines for nutrition for the ageing population are developed through an intersectoral process and deliberate certain matters and difficulties which this certain group faces.

Articles 13 and 14 – The right to education

29. Please explain the decreasing enrolment rates in primary education and provide information on the measures taken to curb this trend. Please also indicate the measures taken to enhance preschool education.

129. The decreasing enrolment rates in primary education might be attributed to the fact that families with children have left the country, due to the prolonged economic crisis and its consequences. As education is compulsory and free in Cyprus, the MOEC takes all necessary measures to ensure school attendance of all children and is in close cooperation with all other pertinent governmental services, so that the Law on Compulsory Education [L.24(I)/1993, as amended] is applied without any exceptions. Parents are obliged by the Law to enroll their children to a school, otherwise they are prosecuted.

130. Measures to enhance preschool education taken by the MOEC appear in Appendix VII.

30. Please explain the significant gender disparities in the enrolment rates in tertiary education and in technical and vocational training and the measures taken to address the disparities.

131. In recent years, the DHTE conducts ongoing mapping of the educational field of higher and tertiary education in Cyprus. The Department has collected data from educational institutions (universities and other institutions of higher education), about general trends/preferences of students in various disciplines, programmes and levels of

study. The data describes the total number of students (Cypriots, EU nationals and non-EU nationals), the number of students in each university and institution of higher education and the courses offered at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level studies. This information is taken into account in the design of reforms and other actions. The data do not indicate any gender disparities in enrolment rates. According to the data provided by the Statistical Service in 2013 the gross enrolment rates in tertiary education were 42% for men and 59% for women.

132. The significant gender disparities in the enrolment rates in technical and vocational education (which for 2013 were 23% for boys and 6% for girls) are due to the fact that boys choose courses that they believe are more suitable for them, such as mechanical engineers, building technicians, carpenters, automotive, agriculture etc. To address this phenomenon and alter existing attitudes teachers and school career counselors have attended seminars conducted under the project “Actions for reducing the gender pay gap”, which was run by the MLWSI and co-financed by the ESF. Moreover, new fields of studies and specializations have been introduced, so that girls have more choices available. These include tourist studies, design studies (graphic and multimedia), hairdressing etc. In addition, a programme is implemented to encourage increased participation by girls in vocational directions and the use of new technologies. The school career counselors implement various actions in schools and discuss with pupils on beliefs and stereotypes to promote the goal on gender equality within the school units.

31. Please provide information on the effects made to secure the adequate level of Turkish-speaking teachers or assistants for Turkish Cypriot students to be educated in their mother tongue. Please also provide information on the measures taken to eradicate segregation in education and to promote an integrated and inclusive education for all children, including children with disabilities, Roma children, Turkish Cypriot children and migrant children.

133. The MOEC through, its three-year strategic plan for the period 2015-2017, is aiming to ensure the provision of learning opportunities to all, through the implementation of an educational policy which embodies the values of equality, inclusivity, creativeness and innovation. The basic goal is to increase access to quality education and provide opportunities for all learners to become successful in their learning, through modernizing teaching methods and approaches, designing and implementing modern developmental programmes and creating the infrastructure that can facilitate high quality education. In the following years, the MOEC will implement structural changes which will upgrade the quality of the education offered, taking into consideration that teachers should be in a position to help pupils cope effectively with any problems they will face as active citizens in the society in the 21st century.

134. Since 2006 the number of Turkish Cypriot pupils attending the Agios Antonios Primary School has been considerably decreased. In 2006-2007, 47 pupils attended compared to 23 who attend the school during the school year 2015-2016, all of whom are self-identified as Roma. Despite this decrease of 51 per cent in the number of pupils, the number of Turkish-speaking teachers and interpreters remains the same. Taking into account that the general rule for the staffing of all schools is one teacher per 25 pupils, the fact that in Agios Antonios there are two teachers and an interpreter for 23 pupils is considered more than sufficient to cater for their linguistic and educational needs. In addition, during the school year 2014-2015, two teaching assistants were placed at the school through a programme funded by the HRDA.

135. The AEC have also organized, for the first time and for two consecutive school years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015) a course for two groups of Roma children, where their history and other elements of their cultural heritage were taught free of charge. The course

titled “History-language-culture” was offered once a week (90 minutes) and lasted for 24 weeks. This programme was repeated during the school year 2015-2016 as well and 13 pupils attended, in two separate groups. In addition, all teachers in the specific school have postgraduate degrees (nine have an M.A and two a PH.d) and attend in-service seminars that help them in their teaching practice. Since January 2016, the school participates in a European funded programme titled “Schools as Learning Opportunities in Europe: Successful Educational Actions for All (SEAS4ALL)” where all stakeholders are involved with an aim to provide a variety of learning opportunities for both pupils and teachers. The MOEC considers that the measures adopted by the Government are adequate and the educational needs of Turkish Cypriot pupils are met and up to their expectations, taking seriously into consideration the country’s current financial situation. The MOEC has fully implemented the programme “Zones of Educational Priority”, particularly in respect of the Agios Antonios Primary School and has ensured that the right to education is respected in practice. This programme has been replaced by the programme “School and Social Inclusion Actions” which includes additional measures. For details see Appendix VIII.

136. The MOEC offers migrant and non-accompanied children attending secondary schools intensive lessons Greek language in small groups, whilst they remain integrated in a specific reference class of the school. Specifically, in lower secondary education pupils attend 18 hours of Greek language lessons per week while in the upper secondary education pupils continue to attend lessons both in Greek and in any other subject they need.

137. The MOEC also serves the needs of children with special needs as provided in the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law [L.113(I)/1999, as amended]. This legislation provides children with special needs with all the opportunities for equal access to education in order to develop their skills to the highest possible degree. For children with disabilities, special emphasis is given to ensuring curriculum access with the use of assistive technology, changes to teaching and learning arrangements, classroom organization, timetabling etc.

Article 15 – Cultural rights

- 32. Please provide detailed information on the online digital cultural portal, as indicated in the report (paragraph 206), and the efforts made to ensure that all persons, including the disadvantaged and marginalized individuals who often have no access to the Internet, benefit from the portal.**

138. The Cultural Services of the MOEC have taken the initiative to create the Cultural Portal which aims to provide important and reliable sources of Cyprus culture, through the contributions of a variety of artists and cultural institutions in Cyprus. The Cultural Portal is a web-based platform which gives the ability to any pre-registered member to contribute data and metadata in digital form. This information refers to five main categories (Visual Arts, Film, Performing Arts, Music and Literature) and more than 53 sub-categories. All submitted data are being evaluated by experts of the Cultural Services, under each category, before they are officially published, so as to avoid duplications, copyright issues and misleading information and, thus, provide reliable cultural information to all people on the island. The Portal’s archive presents artists’ profiles, their creative work as well as criticism and articles written on these works. Additionally, the Portal is open to all social media interactivity which allows all kinds of users to interact with crowdsourced digital collections and share their experiences in various social media. These web-based functionalities can also contribute to the creation of a solid framework for all persons including disadvantaged and computer illiterate users. The Portal is also incorporated in the creation of a national network of cultural information and the promotion of the Cyprus cultural creation internationally. The Cultural Services, as the main body which supports

and develops cultural production in Cyprus, have included in their plans the creation of the Cultural Portal, not only as a data-base hosting the national network of cultural information, but also as a communications hub for cooperation with the European Platform Europeana, for the digitization of cultural heritage, as well as the Cultural Portals of all other countries of the EU. The ultimate target is the gradual incorporation of all cultural information bodies of Cyprus, thus creating an appropriate network, able to present Cyprus culture around the world. The primary guidelines for the creation of the Portal are the collection, elaboration and development, and finally the promotion of reliable information in the spheres of cultural creation. The Portal is scheduled to be launched initially by the Cultural Services and will provide the information and material from their own records in writers, musicians, visual and other artists. In a subsequent step, the Portal will be connected with other cultural information bodies which hold large volumes of cultural information, from all geographical areas of Cyprus, thus creating a national network.

Appendix I

Statistics regarding the Budget and Staff of the Ombudsman's Office for the Years 2009-2015

<i>Year</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Staff (Commissioner+ Permanent Officers+ Officers with a Contract with Indefinite Duration)</i>
2009	1.908.264	1+20+12
2010	2.249.594	1+18+9 ¹
2011	2.085.182	1+18+9
2012	1.922.034	1+18+9
2013	2.003.434	1+18+112
2014	2.090.869	1+17+113
2015	2.111.146	1+17+11

Source: Ombudsman's Office.

¹ In 2010, three officers (two permanent and one with a C.I.D.) were seconded (Ministry of Interior and Cyprus EU Presidency). The one seconded to the Ministry of Interior returned to the office in 2011 and the two seconded to the Presidency, returned in 2013.

Appendix II

General government expenditure by function

	<i>G070 - Health</i>	<i>G090 - Education</i>	<i>G100 - Of which, G1006 - Social protection</i>	<i>Housing</i>	<i>GDP (€ mn)</i>
2004	389,00	812,00	1.249,30	8,10	13.767,00
2005	408,20	856,30	1.427,70	8,90	14.736,60
2006	449,60	919,30	1.486,20	9,20	15.878,90
2007	458,40	1.001,20	1.502,60	9,70	17.375,00
2008	511,80	1.166,50	1.681,30	2,80	18.822,00
2009	552,70	1.220,40	1.852,00	5,90	18.482,30
2010	502,10	1.008,30	2.034,60	7,50	19.117,70
2011	607,10	1.284,20	2.165,60	10,00	19.547,10
2012	578,40	1.184,70	2.203,20	7,10	19.468,90
2013	553,60	1.178,40	2.148,10	3,10	18.064,60
2014*	461,80	1.002,60	2.120,50	1,00	17.393,70

Source: ESA 2010 Questionnaire 1100.

* Provisional figures for 2014.

Explanatory Notes

<i>G070</i>	<i>Health</i>
G0701	Medical products, appliances and equipment
G0702	Outpatient services
G0703	Hospital services
G0704	Public health services
G0705	R&D Health
G0706	Health n.e.c.
<i>G090</i>	<i>Education</i>
G0901	Pre-primary and primary education
G0902	Secondary education
G0903	Post-secondary non-tertiary education
G0904	Tertiary education
G0905	Education not definable by level
G0906	Subsidiary services to education
G0907	R&D Education
G0908	Education n.e.c.

<i>G100</i>	<i>Social protection</i>
G1001	Sickness and disability
G1002	Old age
G1003	Survivors
G1004	Family and children
G1005	Unemployment
<i>G1006</i>	<i>Housing</i>
G1007	Social exclusion n.e.c.
G1008	R&D Social protection
G1009	Social protection n.e.c.

Source: Statistical Service.

Appendix III

Measures covered under the NAPYE for the years 2015-2017

- Timely intervention for early school leavers and easing the transition of young people from school to work (e.g. through adjusting the secondary and post-secondary vocational education curricula to align with labour market requirements and to include work experience in enterprises);
- Reform of the design and implementation of labour market policies targeting youth (e.g. by improving the design and implementation of labour market policies to effectively address the multiple disadvantages faced by young people);
- 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 (e.g. through the introduction of an integrated service delivery model for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, by providing group counseling and job search services to school leavers and newly unemployed youth, through training programs and the provision of skills required by the labour market and by occupations in demand);
- Promotion of entrepreneurship as a career path among young people (e.g. through the YES and the SEP available to young people of the age 20-35 to set up their own enterprise);
- 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 through the NYG);
- Expansion of the capacity of the Public PES for the provision of effective youth employment services (e.g. by enhancing the service capacity of the PES and providing information and guidance to the youth and by upgrading the PES information system);
- Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system to verify the achievement of policy outcomes.

In 2015, several programs targeting young people were implemented in Cyprus both under the NYG initiative as well as under the NAPYE. The activation measures for youth in 2015 include:

- Scheme providing incentives for employment of young unemployed – implemented by the DOL;
- Scheme for the employment and training of Tertiary Education Graduates – implemented by the HRDA;
- The YES – implemented by the MOC;
- Scheme for the Job placement of Young Unemployed graduates for the Acquisition of Work Experience in Enterprises/ Organizations – implemented by the HRDA;
- Scheme for Job Placement of Young Unemployed Graduates of Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary and Post-Secondary Education of up to 2 years for the Acquisition of Work Experience in Enterprises/Organizations – implemented by the HRDA.

Appendix IV

Aid criteria for purchasing a housing unit and/or building a house

<i>Size of Housing Unit (Determined by the family size)</i>	<i>Aid granted to families with annual income up to €30.000</i>	<i>Aid granted to families with annual income between €30.000 and €45.000</i>	<i>Aid Granted to single persons with annual income up to €20.000</i>
One Bedroom (single persons)	-	-	8.500
One Bedroom (couples)	20.000	15.000	
Two Bedrooms (couple with one child or two of same gender)	23.000	18.000	
Three Bedrooms (couple with 2/3 children)	26.000	21.000	
<i>Size of Housing Unit (Determined by the family size)</i>	<i>Aid granted to families with annual income up to €30.000</i>	<i>Aid granted to families with annual income between €30.000 and €45.000</i>	<i>Aid Granted to single persons with annual income up to €20.000</i>
One Bedroom (single persons)	-	-	8.500
One Bedroom (couples)	20.000	15.000	
Two Bedrooms (couple with one child or two of same gender)	23.000	18.000	
Three Bedrooms (couple with 2/3 children)	26.000	21.000	

Source: Ministry of Interior.

Appendix V

Main principles and characteristics of the NHS

- Universal coverage: All Cypriot citizens will become beneficiaries of the NHS.
- Comprehensive benefits package: The NHS benefits package will cover a broad spectrum of healthcare services including primary care, outpatient specialist care, pharmaceuticals, clinical laboratory tests, allied health professionals, accident and emergency care, ambulance services, inpatient care and preventive dental care.
- Equal treatment of beneficiaries: All beneficiaries will have the same rights in respect of the provision of healthcare services and therefore reducing the health inequalities within the NHS.
- Free choice of healthcare providers: Beneficiaries will have the right to choose their healthcare providers from both the public and the private sector.
- Solidarity: Beneficiaries will contribute to the NHS according to their income level. Hence, beneficiaries with higher income will contribute more to the NHS fund for the beneficiaries with lower income.

Appendix VI

Alcohol related actions by Pillar-Added actions implemented for the AP 2013-2016

Prevention Pillar

- Identification, information delivery and referral of pregnant women who use alcohol to relevant services;
- Provision of brief interventions to young people who access emergency departments due to intoxication;
- Provision of measures that support restrictions as regards exposure of young people to alcohol advertising;
- Dissemination of information targeting young people as regards heavy episodic drinking and alcohol related harm (Information material, social media and smart phone applications).

The prevention pillar further include actions that support the alcohol related harm through non substance specific preventive and early detection interventions e.g actions facilitating a supportive environment for vulnerable groups (including young people) with a multisectorial involvement including schools, health authorities, local communities, SWS, the military, sports organisations etc.

Treatment and Social Reintegration Pillar

- Provision of inpatient and outpatient department programmes for alcohol dependency;
- Treatment interventions for specific groups: migrants, women, dual diagnosis;
- Individual and family counseling services for young people and families at risk;
- Outpatient detoxification and psychological treatment programme for alcohol dependent individuals in prisons;
- Provision of aftercare services and financial support system, including alcohol dependent individuals.

Harm Reduction Pillar

Objective – The reduction of drink-driving incidents

- Reduction of blood alcohol concentration levels when driving for novice drivers, professional drivers, motorists and cyclists;
- Systematic breath testing by Road Traffic-Police- campaigns near public holidays etc;
- Enforcement of stricter penalties and fines for repeated drink-driving offenders;
- Supply control and Regulations Pillar;
- Objective- The reduction of availability of alcohol among vulnerable groups;
- Revision of sales of alcoholic beverages legislation (to facilitate better enforcement of age limits);

- Promotion of existing measures for stricter enforcement of legislation as regards sales of alcoholic beverages among young people below age limit;
- Monitoring licensing system for the regulation of alcohol production.

International Cooperation Pillar – Active participation in international dialogue and promotion of international cooperation and networking

Monitoring and Research

- Systematic collection of comparable alcohol related data;
- Working group to monitor alcohol related research and identify research gaps;
- Use of common language for definition of alcohol use and harms;
- Further development of alcohol-related epidemiological indicators.

Added actions implemented

1) AP on Safer Tourism (Cyprus Tourism Organization) aiming to improve safety conditions for the visitors in Cyprus;

2) Pilot mystery shopping programme (University of Cyprus and Anti-Drugs Council): Proposed action to improve compliance to sales of alcoholic beverages legislation and reduce accessibility and availability of alcohol to minors;

3) Development of National Guidelines for Training in Responsible Sales and Serving of Alcohol (2015 edition);

4) Pilot National Training in Responsible Sales and Serving of Alcohol (January-June 2016);

5) Alcohol Awareness Week every third week of October (2013 until today);

6) The Third Alcohol Awareness Week in 2015 focused on two theme priorities on reducing driving incidents and better enforcement/compliance to age restrictions on alcohol accessibility and consumption-involvement of Academic Institutions, Ministries (MOEC, MOJPO, Police, MOCW), youth organizations through a variety of actions. Activities of the week ended with the European Night without Accidents, with the active participation of many relevant stakeholders;

7) A Press Conference was conducted to present recent developments, safer tourism platform outcomes, mystery shopping results, Guidelines for Training for Responsible Sales and Serving of Alcohol and the proposed amendments for legislation on sales of alcoholic beverages.

Appendix VII

Measures to enhance preschool education taken by the MOEC

- Pre-primary education is compulsory and free to all children aged from 4 years and 8 months to 5 years and 8 months who attend public kindergartens. Children of the above age are obliged to attend, either public, community or private kindergartens. Vacant places in public kindergartens are taken by younger children, aged from 3 years to 4 years and 8 months. The selection of these children is made according to specific criteria, set by the Council of Ministers, concerning special educational needs, children at risk and socioeconomic deprivation.
- The MOEC subsidizes the operation of community kindergartens which operate in cases where the public kindergarten classes available do not meet the needs of all applications.
- Children at the age of 3 years to 4 years and 8 months, attending public kindergartens, pay low fees- a symbolic amount of €42. Free allowance is given to poor families, whereas reduction of fees is given to families with four or more children.
- The revision of the curriculum, the upgrading of buildings and outdoor playgrounds, the decrease of the number of pupils per class to facilitate better teaching and learning opportunities as well as teachers' in-service training, are also among the measures taken by the MOEC to enhance preschool education.

Appendix VIII

Measures included by the School and Social Inclusion Actions

- Extra support provided to pupils in language and mathematics;
- Teacher assistants in all classes;
- Additional extra-curricular activities (such as sports and dancing) during school hours as well as after school hours.

Moreover, the MOEC provides extra psychological assistance to the school through the provision of a school psychologist who visits the school once a week, on a regular basis.

The main challenges arising in Cyprus, with regards to safeguarding the right to education of Roma pupils, include persuading Roma families to enroll their children at school and creating an environment of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect between pupils and parents of different ethnic origins. Integrating Turkish Cypriot, Roma and other pupils at risk of exclusion into the school's society is equally important.

Specifically, the actions taken by the MOEC to support Turkish Cypriot and Roma pupils in secondary education include:

- Offering lessons of Turkish language and culture by a Turkish Cypriot teacher;
 - Offering lessons of Greek language by Turkish speaking teachers;
 - Provision of bilingual teachers who facilitate communication between teachers, pupils and parents;
 - Provision of breakfast to Roma pupils;
 - Provision of special support to Roma pupils from the EPS and the SWS;
 - Organising intercultural activities and events;
 - Organising educational seminars for parents and legal guardians on subject matters of their interest, based on the distinctive characteristics of each local community in which they reside.
-