

**UN SPECIAL RAPONTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Call for Inputs: Air Pollution and Human Rights**

I herewith refer to above subject and I submit our answers to the questionnaire provided with your letter:

1. The legislative framework regarding Air Emissions and Atmospheric Air Quality in Cyprus is completely harmonised with the relevant European legislation

These harmonising laws and Regulations have the following main aims:

- a) Employ and designate target values for the quality of ambient air in the Republic of Cyprus.
- b) Evaluate ambient air quality based on common methods and criteria set by the European Union.
- c) Attain all the necessary information regarding the quality of ambient air.
- d) Inform the public on ambient air quality in Cyprus.
- e) Maintain ambient air quality where it is good or otherwise improve it.
- f) Promote collaboration between EU member states in order to reduce air pollution levels.

2. The competent authority for Air Emissions and Air Quality monitoring is the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance of Cyprus. The responsible Department of the Ministry is the Department of Labour Inspection (DLI). The Air Quality and Strategic Planning Section of DLI deals with the continuous monitoring and information of the pollutant levels in ambient air as well as with the management of ambient air quality so that the protection of the citizens' and workers' health and wellbeing and environment protection can be safeguarded.

The air quality network for the monitoring of the ambient air quality in Cyprus was established in 2006 with the aim to protect and inform the population regarding the ambient air quality and it is consisted by 9 stations. This network operates according to the specifications of Cyprus and European legislation. The stations of the network are equipped with modern instruments in line with the standards of respective European networks.

For the better management of the network and the demonstration of air quality in Cyprus, the stations are categorized based on the legislation, according to the measurement area:

- Traffic stations which are stations representative of areas with high traffic (Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaka, Pafos, Paralimni).

- Residential stations which are stations representative of residential areas (Nicosia).
- Industrial stations which are stations representative of industrial areas (Zygi, Mari).
- Background stations which are representative of background areas (Agia Marina Xyliatou).

The results from the measurements (real time data) as well as any other relevant information is given to the public online through the specialised website [www.airquality.gov.cy](http://www.airquality.gov.cy). In addition, DLI, for the public information, proceeded to the production of a mobile application with android and iOS operating systems, for the direct information of workers, the sensitive group of population, the public, the involved groups, the visitors and others interested groups. Through this application, the interested people can have direct access to information for the air quality in Cyprus, examining the different air pollution levels with different colors on Cyprus map as well as examining the concentrations of pollutants per monitoring station.

DLI, as the competent authority for the implementation of the legislation for the assessment and management of air quality in Cyprus and due to the exceedances observed in the limit value for the Particulate Matter (PM10) during the period 2005 – 2007, in November 2006 prepared a draft National Action Plan for the improvement of air quality in Cyprus. This National Action Plan was sent to the members of the Technical Committee which is foreseen by the relevant legislation for the air quality and is consisted by representatives of other six ministries, the Technical Chamber of Cyprus and the Federation of Environmental Organisations of Cyprus. In addition, members from the local authorities as well as the Commissioner of Environment were called to participate during the public consultation.

After a series of meetings and exchange of suggestions and views, the final document of the National Action Plan was prepared, which was approved by the Council of Ministers on 6 February 2008 and it was sent to European Committee (EC) while at the same time it was published in the DLI's website for the information of the public.

Some of the measures included in the National Action Plan for the reduction of the air pollutants being implemented are the following:

- Improved information system for the operation of the buses and the application of a system for the issuing and validation of tickets.
- Extension of the institution of the public transportation with the free transportation of the pupils of schools.
- The preparation of Integrated Plans for the Mobility in all city areas.
- The provision and the use of Natural Gas for the needs of the energy sector for the next five years.

- The promotion of the use of the Renewable Energy Sources (RES) for the achievement of the target of 13% use of RES in the final use of energy by 2020.
- The use of biofuels and other renewable fuels for the transport sector.
- The development of the renewable fuels' market in the transport sector.
- The termination of the use and restoration of Uncontrolled Waste Disposal Sites.
- The exploitation of biogas produced in Landfilled Sites.
- The successful implementation and the enforcement of the relevant institutional framework which determines the prerequisites for the installation and operation of polluting installations as well as the maximum allowable limits of pollutants.

3. Due to the exceedances observed in the daily limit value for the PM10 during the period 2005 – 2007, as they determined in the relevant European legislation for Air Quality, the EC initiated judicial procedure against Cyprus under the implementation of article 226 of the Treaty for the operation of the European Union for the exceedances.

The Cyprus Government did not accept that it did not satisfy the above obligation related to the exceedances of the daily limit value for the PM10 and it sent reports and data which proved that during the period 2005 – 2007 a large number of exceedances of the daily limit value for the PM10 is caused by natural sources which can be exempt from the total number of exceedances.

The judicial procedure against Cyprus, for the exceedances of the limit values for the PM10 during the period 2005 -2007, was terminated in 27.2.2012 since the EC accepted the report sent by DLI to the EC including calculations proving that the most of the exceedances were caused by natural sources.

Apart from this, the Government takes additional measures in order to reduce the level of the anthropogenic PM10 emissions through the implementation of the measures of the National Action Plan for the improvement of Air Quality in Cyprus.

4. In Cyprus, dust storm events, transported from the Sahara Desert and dry areas of North Africa and Middle East, occur frequently. For this reason, in cases where exceedances of limit values are observed, the Air Quality and Strategic Planning Section of DLI issues relevant announcement and sends it to the Public Information Office to disseminate the information to all mass media. In addition, officers of the Section, if they are asked, give relevant interviews to radio and television stations.

The aim of these announcements is to warn the public and especially the sensitive groups of the population (children, elderly and patients)

to avoid the unnecessary transportations in open areas as well as to protect the workers working in open spaces.

5. Environmental permits in Cyprus are issued by the competent authority following consultation with a Technical Committee in which non-state actors participate in addition representatives of several ministries.
6. DLI, as the competent authority for the implementation of the legislation for the assessment and management of air quality in Cyprus and due to the exceedances observed in the limit value for the Particulate Matter (PM10) during the period 2005 – 2007, in November 2006 prepared a draft National Action Plan for the improvement of air quality in Cyprus. This National Action Plan was sent to the members of the Technical Committee which is foreseen by the relevant legislation for the air quality and is consisted by representatives of other six ministries, the Technical Chamber of Cyprus and the Federation of Environmental Organisations of Cyprus. In addition, members from the local authorities as well as the Commissioner of Environment were called to participate during the public consultation.

The Technical Committee meets once every year to examine the progress of the implementation of the measures of the National Action Plan which is updated annually with new data and information. A representative of the Federation of Environmental Organizations participates in this meeting and his/her suggestions and comments regarding the National Action Plan are taken very seriously for its implementation and for safeguarding the fulfillment of Cyprus' obligations regarding human rights relevant to Air Quality.