



**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
26<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY:  
THE AMBASSADOR/ PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
H.E. MR. ANDREAS IGNATIOU**

**UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

**ITEM 6**

**GENEVA  
20 JUNE, 2014**

**Mr. President,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Distinguished Delegates,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen**

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Cyprus attributes great significance to the UPR process, to which we are fully committed as it is the only universal mechanism where all States are reviewed for their human rights record. The second cycle was a valuable opportunity for us to assess both the implementation of the recommendations of the first cycle as well as our overall progress in the field of human rights. We strongly believe that this process is a critical element in our efforts to further improve our human rights situation.

In this spirit, the Government of Cyprus has carefully considered the 105 recommendations received during its second cycle of UPR. This was done in consultation with the competent Authorities, national independent monitoring mechanisms, such as the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights, the Ombudsman and other independent institutions, such as the Commissioner of Humanitarian Issues. Out of 105 recommendations, we accepted 96. More specifically, 87 recommendations are supported. This includes 4 recommendations that are accepted in principle, which are recommendations, 114.21, 114.23, 114.24, and 114.56). Additionally, one recommendation, recommendation 114.7 is clarified, and 17 recommendations are noted. This includes three recommendations that are accepted in principle and in specific, recommendations 114.1, 114.9 and 114.100.

Cyprus **is not able to accept** recommendations which the Government is not able to commit to implement at this stage. For example, we are not able to accept the recommendations concerning the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families. This is due to the fact that, Cyprus is bound by the official EU position on the matter, to the

effect that, at present, the European Union Member States are not in a position to sign or ratify it, as its text raises 'several difficulties'. However, Cyprus transposed into national law the relevant European Acquis, fostering the rights of the migrants and of their families.

**Mr. President,**

The Government is committed to the promotion and implementation of the fundamental human rights instruments and will continue to strengthen its efforts to ensure that, policies and legislation towards the protection and safeguarding human rights will be in line with international standards. Through the internal evaluation process, we recognized that despite the progress so far achieved, additional and continuous effort is required to meet the constantly arising new challenges in the field of human rights. This is reflected in the great number of recommendations which we accept.

Let me touch upon particular areas of recommendations we accept.

One of the main priorities of the Government of Cyprus is safeguarding the **rights of migrants**. This is evident through the series of measures it has taken and will continue to take in order to balance the need for an effective immigration system and safeguarding the rights of migrants. While at the same time, it aims to promote a more co-ordinated and effective approach among the competent authorities. The revised National Action Plan for migrants' integration, covering the years 2014-2016, is being prepared in close consultation with the national independent monitoring mechanisms, NGOs, civil society and Social Partners. The key elements of the revised National Action Plan will include, inter alia, social inclusion and protection of vulnerable individuals, anti-discrimination and anti-racist policy actions.

Regarding **asylum seekers**, Cyprus has taken measures to strengthen the capacity to provide care and housing to asylum seekers. In particular, with the financial aid of the European Refugee Fund, Cyprus is expanding the Reception

and Accommodation Centre for Applicants of International Protection in Kofinou, This centre, will have the capacity to accommodate up to 400 people by the end of 2014. At the same time, it has proceeded with maintenance activities and with the replacement of equipment in order to upgrade and improve the living conditions within the centre.

Cyprus has also increased its efforts to combat **trafficking in human beings**. For example, the Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting its Victims, was recently transposed into national law. This was implemented with Law L.60(I)/2014, which came into force on 15/4/2014. It is expected that prosecution of perpetrators will be more effective, and the rights of child-victims will be further protected as the Law contains special provisions to that effect.

Mr. President,

The fight against **discrimination**, xenophobia and stereotyping is one of the main priorities of the Government at all levels, including, inter alia, education, healthcare, sports and labour. For instance, the National Action Plan on Minimising the Consequences of the Economic Crisis in Public Healthcare, which covers the period September 2013-September 2015, is a useful tool in identifying the challenges caused by the current economic constraints and ways to address them. This National Action Plan was the outcome of consultation among competent authorities, and national independent monitoring mechanisms.

Regarding **gender equality** in workplace, the new National Action Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2014-2017 has now been completed. It follows close collaboration with all competent authorities, national independent monitoring mechanisms, the National Machinery for Women's Rights, women's organizations, other NGOs, academic institutions and human rights bodies. Combating all forms of violence against women will be one of the six priority areas of this National Action Plan. The Ombudsman, in her capacity as Equality Authority, cooperates

with the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration and the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies to organize an awareness raising campaign on zero tolerance to violence against women and girls in Cyprus. This will be a national media campaign during the period of September 2014 until November 2015 and additionally there will be special training to first line officers during March 2014-November 2015). Furthermore, a Code on Sexual Harassment in Public Service will be introduced during that period and a series of special training seminars on gender equality issues to public officers will be launched (up until 2017). The Government's commitment to gender equality is further demonstrated with the recent appointment of a Commissioner of Gender Equality, on 12/3/2014, an independent institution, which is entrusted with competence to promote gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Acknowledging the need for immediate reformation of the operation of the **prisons**, the Government introduced a far-reaching reformation program. This was based on international human rights standards and norms, and proceeded with drastic corrective measures. The reformation program contains short, medium and long-term measures. Prisons are already undergoing a considerable restructuring of its leadership and management team. This is in order to ensure that prison conditions are aligned with the basic principles for the treatment of inmates, including respect of their human rights and dignity.

**Mr. President,**

Adding to the above, some more recent developments was the enactment of Law L.7(III)/2014, ratifying the Cooperation Agreement between Cyprus and the International Organization for Migration of 13/6/2014. This Law is considered as a milestone, in that it will serve as a useful and comprehensive tool to address the multifaceted issue of irregular migration.

Mr. President,

