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## **CHARTRE SOCIALE EUROPEENNE (révisée)**

5ème Rapport national sur l'application de la Charte Sociale européenne  
(révisée)

soumis par

### ***LE GOUVERNEMENT DE CHYPRE***

(pour la période du 01.01.2003 – 31.12.2006 (article 18§4) et  
01.01.2005- 31.12.2006)

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Sur les articles 1 §§ 1, 2, 3, article 9, article 10 §§ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, article 15 §§  
1, 2, 3, article 18§4, article 20 et article 24

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Rapport enregistré au Secrétariat le 5 novembre 2007

# GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

## Report on

### Article 1

#### of the Revised European Social Charter

## THE RIGHT TO WORK

(Reference Period 01.01.2005 – 31.12.2006)

### **ARTICLE 1 PARA. 1**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work, the Parties undertake:*

*to accept as one of their primary aims and responsibilities the achievement and maintenance of as high and stable a level of employment as possible, with a view to the attainment of full employment;"*

### **Question A**

**Please indicate the policy followed by your government in attempting to reach and maintain full employment. Please supplement with details of the measures and programmes implemented to achieve as high and stable a level of employment as possible.**

According to the "National Lisbon Programme of the Republic of Cyprus", the overall objectives of the employment policies in Cyprus, in line with the European Employment Strategy (EES), concentrate on enhancing the conditions of full employment, improving quality and productivity at work and strengthening social cohesion. The achievement of the above objectives requires an effective tackling of the major challenges confronting Cyprus. The main challenges faced by Cyprus are the following:

1. Maintain high rates of increase of labour supply, particularly by raising old-aged and female participation rates and reduce gender inequality;
2. Increase the flexibility of the labour market;
3. Orderly management of economic migration issues to serve the economic and social needs of the country;
4. Further development of human capital;
5. Enhance further the conditions of social cohesion.

### **Measures that are being promoted**

1. Maintain High Rates of Increase of Labour Supply, particularly by Raising

## Old-aged and Female Participation Rates, and Reduce Gender Inequality

### Increasing Female Participation

- Continuation of the Scheme for the Encouragement, Strengthening and Reinforcement of Female Entrepreneurship.
- Scheme for the promotion of training and employability of economically inactive women - within the framework of the activities of the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA). The scheme, co-financed by the ESF, will be implemented, over the period 2005–2008.
- Continuation of the Government Grants in Aid Scheme, providing, financial and technical assistance to non governmental organizations and local communities for the development of child care facilities and family support services for older persons and persons with disabilities.
- Action aiming at expansion and improvement of care services for the children, the elderly, the disabled and other dependents, co-financed from the European Social Fund (ESF). The action entails the following activities:
  - Carrying out a survey aiming at the identification of social care needs at the local level;
  - Development of ten programmes addressing the needs of older persons, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, such as day care programmes.
- Implementation of a measure, co-financed from the ESF, under the Community Initiative EQUAL of the Structural Funds, aiming at the reconciliation of family and professional life by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organization and support services. The implementation of the measure started in 2005 and will be completed in 2007.
- Action aiming at the promotion of flexible forms of employment, co-financed from the ESF, under Objective 3 of the Structural Funds. The action is presented, in more detail, in the section concerning the flexibility of the labour market.

### Gender Equality

- Increase of the public funds allocated to NGOs and the National Machinery of Women Rights to promote and implement gender equality programmes.

- Undertaking of a comprehensive study, in 2006, with a view to identifying problems and defining possible ways, including best practices in other countries, in order to reduce the gender pay gap.

#### Active Ageing

- Continuation of the scheme promoting the self employment of elderly persons. This Scheme aims to keep persons, over 63 years old, active by providing them with incentives for re-activation and participation in social life.
- Increase of the retirement age – as from 1.7.2005, the retirement age for civil servants is being gradually increased from 60 to 63 years; the retirement age of 63 becoming fully effective as from July 2008.
- Increase of the retirement age in the broader public sector from currently 60 to 63 years.

#### Build Employment Pathways for Young People

- A Scheme for youth entrepreneurship providing government grants with a view to fostering youth entrepreneurship was introduced in July 2004, aiming to support activities falling within the sectors of manufacturing and e-commerce, as well as specific activities dealing with services and tourism. Additionally, this Scheme promotes the development of innovative projects, the adoption of new technologies and new products, and the support of services that enhance the quality of the tourism product.
- A Scheme for the promotion of training and employability of young secondary education school leavers, co-financed by the ESF is implemented by the HRDA. This scheme aims at providing vocational training opportunities and organized practical experience to young secondary education school leavers, so as to significantly improve their potential in entering/ reentering the labour market.

#### Build Employment Pathways for the Unemployed

- A Scheme for the promotion of training and employability of the unemployed, co-financed by the ESF is implemented by the HRDA, over the period 2005-2008. The scheme aims at providing vocational training opportunities and organized practical experience to the unemployed so as to significantly improve their potential in entering/ reentering the labour market.

## 2. Increase the Flexibility in the Labour Market

### Enhancement and Modernisation of the Public Employment Services (PES)

- Implementation of a measure aiming at enhancing and modernizing the

Public Employment Services, over the 2005-2008 period, co-financed from the ESF, under Objective 3 of the Structural Funds. The enhancement and modernisation of the Public Employment Services is expected to contribute positively towards increasing labour market flexibility by a better matching of the demand and supply of labour and the better utilisation of the labour force.

#### Promotion of Flexible Forms of Employment

- Action aiming at the promotion of flexible forms of employment, co-financed from the ESF, under Objective 3 of the Structural Funds. The action entails the following activities:
  - Undertaking of a study with a view to identifying modern and flexible forms of employment in other countries, as well recommendations for specific flexible forms of employment in the case of Cyprus.
  - Pilot implementation.
  - Evaluation of the pilot implementation. It will take place in the first half of 2008.

#### Ongoing Assessment of the Economy's Labour Market Needs

A better anticipation of skill needs, labour market shortages and bottlenecks will contribute positively towards achieving a better matching of the demand and supply of labour and the better utilisation of the labour force. Towards this end, the HRDA will conduct the following studies:

- Long term Employment Forecasts in the Cyprus Economy 2005-2015 (provision of employment forecasts for 44 selected economic sectors and for 27 selected occupations).
- Long term Forecasts for the Employment Prospects in Higher Level occupations in Cyprus 2005-2015 (examination of the employment prospects in 104 higher-level occupations).
- Long term Forecasts for the Employment Prospects in Middle Level occupations in Cyprus 2005-2015 (examination of the employment prospects in 90 middle-level occupations).
- Annual investigations for the identification of initial training needs, with the involvement of the Social Partners.

#### 3. Orderly Management of Economic Migration Issues to Serve the Economic and Social Needs of the Country

- Preparation of a new strategy for the effective management of economic migration.

#### 4. Further Development of Human Capital

##### Formal education

In recognition of the crucial role of education and training for the future course of the Cyprus economy, the Government is promoting major reforms at the upper secondary cycle of the educational system, including the technical and vocational schooling. In this context, there is a systematic effort to develop a better balance between basic areas of learning, new technological developments related to the shift towards a knowledge-based economy and the needs of the labour market.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture is implementing a programme for introducing information technology in all levels of education.

Apart from the promotion of the above-mentioned reforms in upper secondary education, a number of initiatives are also underway to increase opportunities for university level studies in Cyprus. These include the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers for establishing a Technological University and an Open University, in order to facilitate access to learning for all citizens of any age wishing to learn.

##### Training

##### Continuous Improvement of the Quality of Education at all Levels

- Implementation of an action, during the period 2005-2008, aiming at introducing modern technology in education, co-financed from the ESF, under Objective 3 of the Structural Funds.
- Implementation of an action, during the period 2005-2008, aiming at ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate and will acquire skills to implement the new, ICT oriented, curricula. The action is co-financed from the ESF, under Objective 3 of the Structural Funds,

##### Increase Opportunities for University Studies in Cyprus

- Introduction of new departments in the University of Cyprus.
- Operation of the Open University of Cyprus.
- Potential for establishment of Private Universities, following the enactment of the relevant legislative framework regulating their operation in July 2005.

##### Continuous Upgrading of Skills to Labour Market Needs

- Implementation of an action aiming at strengthening the quality and attractiveness of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) and improving the organization of STVE, co-financed from the ESF, under

### Objective 3 of the Structural Funds.

- Implementation of action aiming at upgrading the apprenticeship scheme, rendering it a creditworthy, desirable and practical option for all those wishing to continue their career development via the vocational and not the educational path. The action is co-financed from the ESF, under Objective 3 of the Structural Funds.
- Undertaking of a special study aiming at evaluating the impact of the existing HRDA's schemes on the labour market and the Cyprus economy in general.
- Extension of the rendered training programmes
  - Promotion of training and employability of economically inactive women
  - Promotion of training and employability of the unemployed
  - Promotion of training and employability of young secondary education school leavers.

Moreover, the HRDA will promote during the period 2005-2008 consultancy services and Training to Microenterprises employing 1-4 persons, through a scheme, co-financed by the ESF.

Furthermore, in the framework of the policy priority area for adapting the education and training systems in response to new competence requirements, the Human Resource Development Authority will promote during the period 2005-2008 the following measures:

- Further support of the Training Infrastructure of Institutions and Enterprises – through appropriate enrichment of the existing scheme entitled Training Infrastructure Support Scheme (de minimis rule).
- Introduction of a Vocational Qualifications System in two phases, over the period 2006-2013, covering a broader range of occupations in the sectors of manufacturing, the hotel industry, construction, trade/ repairs of motor vehicles as well as cross sectoral occupations, mainly the administrative ones.

### Development of a Comprehensive Life-Long Learning Strategy

- Elaboration of a comprehensive life-long learning strategy.

### 5. Enhance the Conditions of Social Cohesion

#### Horizontal Measures

- Implementation of a measure aiming at facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated, co-financed from the ESF, under the Community Initiative EQUAL of the Structural Funds. The measure, which started in 2005 and will be completed in 2007, entails, inter alia, the following activities:
  - Promotion of approaches that combine guidance, training, placement as well as individualised services and usage of all information systems and development of the skills of target groups;
  - Improvement of the skills of members of these groups by providing mentoring and support, in order to ensure the active participation of the target groups at all stages of implementation;
  - Development of the skills of a significant number of unemployed who are discriminated, in particular, to specialisations in the social sector of the economy and activities concerning the commercial use of the internet and new technologies of communications.

#### Public Assistance Recipients

- Review of the legislation on Public Assistance.
- Implementation of a Scheme for the activation of public assistance recipients and promotion of equal opportunities for their integration into the labour market.

#### Persons with Disabilities

- Implementation of a training scheme for the disabled, co-financed from the ESF, within the framework of Objective 3 of the Structural Funds.
- Implementation of a scheme providing incentives for the employment of people with disabilities, co-financed from the ESF, within the framework of Objective 3 of the Structural Funds.

#### Older Persons

- Elaboration and implementation of a 10 year Action Plan for the development of health care services for the elderly, setting short, medium- and long- term targets.

- Implementation of the National Action Plan for Older Persons. The main pillars of the plan include:
  - A system of Social Protection to secure decent living standards for older persons.
  - Productive occupation of older persons;
  - Securing an accessible and supportive environment through the provision of home and institutional care services for the elderly and persons with disabilities, day care and tele-care services, family support grants, vacation support and housing grants;
  - Access to knowledge, education and lifelong learning;
  - Healthcare provision.

#### Children and Families at Risk of Poverty

- Elaboration and implementation of an Action Plan for Children 2005-2010.

#### Drug Users

- Implementation of the National Drug Strategy and the Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (2004–2008).

#### Asylum Seekers

- Implementation of a measure, co-financed from the ESF, under the Community Initiative EQUAL of the Structural Funds, aiming at the promotion of supporting interventions for asylum seekers until the final assessment of their application.

#### Access to Housing

- Continuation of the various housing schemes aiming to assist low-income families and refugees to acquire their own home.

#### Safeguarding Affordable Access to Government Services, including Education and Health to all

**Please indicate, if possible, the trend in total employment policy expenditure over the past five years, including the relative shares of**

**"active" (job creation, training, etc.) and "passive" (financial compensation, etc.) measures.**

Expenditure by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) over the past five years

Overall expenditure by the HRDA on human resource training and development activities over the past five years (2002 – 2006) amounted to more than Cy£ 27.9 m. or over € 47.1 m. As it can be seen from the annual expenditure shown below, expenditure on training shows a steady increase over the whole period under consideration.

Training expenditure

<u>Year</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	
	<u>CYPRUS £</u>	<u>€ EURO</u>
2002	4.167.292	7.084.396
2003	5.253.849	8.931.543
2004	5.551.586	9.437.696
2005	6.461.708	10.832.704
2006	6.501.739	10.899.813
Total	27.936.174	47.186.152

**Please indicate the active policy measures taken in order to favour access to employment of groups most exposed to or affected by unemployment (eg. women, the young<sup>1</sup>, older workers, the long-term unemployed<sup>2</sup>, the disabled, immigrants and/or ethnic minorities). Please give indications on the number of beneficiaries from these measures and information, if possible, on their impact on employment.**

According to the "National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion" of Cyprus, the policy measures taken in order to favour access to employment of groups most exposed to or affected by unemployment are:

- The modernisation of the Public Employment Services has enhanced the capacity of dealing with special groups, such as persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed, women, older persons and other vulnerable groups.
- The strategy for the employment of third country nationals is being revised. This strategy will enhance efforts to promote access to the labour market

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<sup>1</sup> Aged between fifteen and twenty-four.

<sup>2</sup> Persons without employment for over one year and seeking employment.

for persons facing special problems (e.g. women, young persons and older workers), since these persons are affected by the influx of foreign labour force in Cyprus.

- Vocational training programmes.
- The legal minimum wage, which applies only to certain occupations (clerks, shop-assistants, child care and nursing aids) is of special importance in encouraging the employment of women, given they make up a large share of the occupations to which the Law applies.

The Council of Ministers has decided that, by 2008, the minimum wage should gradually reach 50% of the median national wage. To that effect, the minimum monthly wage in 2006 was fixed at CY£ 384 on engagement and at CY£ 408 after six months of employment, compared to CY£ 362 and CY£ 385, respectively, in 2005.

In addition, a study is being conducted on the gender pay gap with a view to analysing the extent of the problem, identifying its main parameters and making recommendations for narrowing and finally eliminating the gap.

#### Target Group: Young persons

- The Council of Ministers decided to transfer, as from January 2006, the responsibility for the administration of the Apprenticeship Scheme from the Department of Labour to the Cyprus Productivity Centre. The responsibility for training the apprentices remains with the Ministry of Education and Culture. The objective regarding the Apprenticeship Scheme is twofold: In the short run, the aim is to introduce improvements to the Scheme in its present form and in the medium and long term to promote reform of the Apprenticeship Scheme into a New Modern Apprenticeship, that will constitute an alternative way both to meet the educational and training needs of young persons, who leave formal education early and to satisfy the needs of the labour market.
- Schemes for Promoting Employability of Young Persons: The schemes include:
  - Recruitment incentives
  - Specialised services for vocational guidance and placement to employment as well as programmes of work experience.
  - A special web-site to provide information for young persons.
- A Programme for Enhancing Youth Entrepreneurship has been in operation since 2004. Its purpose is to promote activities for fostering youth entrepreneurship through specific incentives and to promote equality of opportunities for young persons to develop entrepreneurial activities.

#### Target group: Women

- A special Scheme for the Enhancement of Women's Entrepreneurship has been in operation since 2002. It aims at encouraging women to develop entrepreneurial activities in various sectors of the economy with state subsidisation.
- Promoting modern and flexible forms of employment with the aim of attracting unemployed and economically inactive women to employment, has been the subject of a diagnostic study co-financed by the European Social Fund. Subsequently, a scheme is being worked out for the subsidising of employers who create additional jobs under flexible arrangements. The purpose of the study was the identification of specific forms of flexible employment that are more likely to be successfully implemented in Cyprus, the sectors of economic activity and categories of enterprises where they could be introduced, the ways of addressing implementation problems and the institutional framework that should regulate these forms of employment.
- In 2006, a study was completed on care services.
- Increase of care programmes

#### Target group: Persons with disabilities

- The **Centre for the Occupational Rehabilitation of the Disabled** provides facilities for assessing the abilities of persons with disabilities and for training in technical occupations that will facilitate their placement in productive employment. In addition, the Centre provides services aimed at helping persons with disabilities to use their potential, to become independent and to cope with any psychological and social problem they may face.

Moreover, the Centre provides employment in its workshops to trainees with productive capacity, paying them a special allowance on top of the regular training allowance. The number of persons with disabilities who received training, in the period 2004-2006, was about 40 in each year.

- The **Scheme for the Self-employment of Persons with Severe Disabilities** provides for a grant of up to CY£2.000 to severely disabled persons and for a subsidy of interest of up to CY£300 for a loan not exceeding five years, to encourage self-employment of such persons. For group self-employment an extra subsidy of CY£500 for each additional person is payable. During 2004-2006, 15 persons received assistance.
- The **Scheme for Financial Assistance through the special fund of the Centre for the Occupational Rehabilitation of the Disabled, for the creation and operation of small units for self-employment of persons with disabilities** provides a grant of up to CY£3.000 and of up to CY£200 for interest on a loan not exceeding seven years to persons with

disabilities wishing to become self-employed. Until June 2006 (the first year of operation of the Scheme) five persons were assisted.

- The **Scheme for Training Persons with Disabilities in occupations for which training is not available at the Centre** provides for a grant of up to CY£1.000 for fees paid by people with disabilities attending a course of vocational training that would facilitate their employment and their career prospects. The number of persons who benefited from the scheme was 7 in 2004, 16 in 2005 and 4 in the first half of 2006.
- The purpose of the **Scheme for Support of Employment of Severely Disabled Persons** is to encourage employment of severely disabled persons in the open labour market, mainly through the provision of personal support by a trained guide. Under this Scheme a grant of up to CY£6.000 is given to organisations that intend to offer such programmes, against the costs of the support services to be provided. The number of persons who benefited from such programmes in 2004, 2005 and 2006 (first half) was 172, 176 and 180, respectively.
- The **Scheme for the Subsidisation of Employment of Persons with Disabilities** provides subsidies to employers of up to 40% of the annual salary, subject to a maximum of CY£3.200, for every employed person with disabilities, during the first 12 months of their employment.
- The **Scheme Providing Incentives for the Employment of Severely Disabled Persons** in the private sector provides subsidies to employers of up to 40% of the annual wages, subject to a maximum of CY£3.200, for the installation of facilities for severely disabled employees. In addition, it subsidizes the employment of such persons up to 60% of their annual salary, subject to a maximum of CY£4.800.
- A **Unit for the Occupational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Ill** has been in operation since 2002 in Nicosia.

## **Question B**

**Please indicate the trends in employment<sup>3</sup> covering all sectors of the economy. In connection with this, indicate as far as possible, the activity rate<sup>4</sup>, the employment rate<sup>5</sup> and the breakdown of employment by region, by sex, by age, by employment status (employed, self-**

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<sup>3</sup> Reference is made to the definition of employment adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, 1982) or any further versions.

<sup>4</sup> The activity rate represents the total labour force as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over and living in private households. The labour force is defined as the sum of persons in employment plus the unemployed.

<sup>5</sup> The employment rate represents persons in employment as a percentage of the population aged 15-64 years and living in private households.

**employed), by type of employment (full time and part time, permanent and fixed term, temporary), and by sector of activity.**

See Tables 1-7 in Appendix III.

**Please give the trend of the figures and percentages of unemployed in your country, including the proportion of unemployed to the total labour force. Please give a breakdown of the unemployed by region, category, sex, age and by length of unemployment.**

See Tables 8-12 in Appendix III.

### **Question C**

**Please indicate the trend in the number and the nature of vacant jobs in your country.**

See Tables 13-14 in Appendix III.

### **ARTICLE 1 PARA. 2**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work, the Parties undertake:*

*to protect effectively the right of the worker to earn his living in an occupation freely entered upon;"*

[The Appendix to the Charter stipulates that this provision shall not be interpreted as prohibiting or authorising any union security clause or practice.]

#### ***Elimination of all forms of discrimination in employment***

The HRDA in pursuit of its non-discriminatory, positive action policies, promotes activities and measures that aim to narrow the gap in training participations between women and men, always within the framework of its mission i.e. to meet the economy's needs for well trained human resources. Activities and measures are established through research studies and surveys.

### **Question A**

**Please give information concerning legislative or other measures taken to ensure the elimination of all discrimination in employment which might be based on sex, social or national origin, political opinion,**

**religion, race, colour or age and to promote effectively equal opportunities in seeking employment and in taking up an occupation.**

**Please give information in this respect on existing sanctions and remedies in cases of discrimination in employment.**

- The Law for the Equal Treatment between Men and Women in Occupational Social Security Schemes No. 133(I) of 2002 which transposed the Directives 86/378/EC, 96/97/EC, and 97/80/EC came into force on 1/1/2003.

The main objective of this Law is to implement in occupational social security schemes, the principle of equal treatment for men and women. The Law provides among others against gender discrimination in the occupational social security schemes regarding their membership conditions, vesting requirements, and benefits.

- The Provident Funds (Amendment) Law No. 130(I) of 2003 came into force on 1/1/2003

The main objective of this Law is to implement in Provident Funds, the principle of equal treatment for men and women as stipulated in the Law for the Equal Treatment between Men and Women in Occupational Social Security Schemes No. 133(I) of 2002.

- The Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Occupational Training (Amending) Law of 2006 (40(I)/2006) was enacted.

The amendment of the Law makes the definition of sexual harassment clearer and distinguishes it from non-sexual gender-based harassment. Furthermore, it allows NGOs to represent their members in court or submit a complaint on behalf of their members. Also, it gives the social partners more say in measures taken on enterprise level. A copy of the Law (in greek) is attached as Appendix II.

## **Question B**

**Please indicate any methods adopted:**

**a. to seek the co-operation of employers' and workers' organisations and other appropriate bodies in promoting the acceptance and observance of the above policy of non-discrimination;**

No change.

**b. to ensure the acceptance and observance of the above policy through educational efforts.**

Education in Cyprus is considered as a basic human right and as such it is provided free of charge and is compulsory from the age of 4 years and 8 months to the age of 15 years, according to the provisions of the Law 24(I) of 1993 “Law Providing for the Compulsory Tuition and the Provision of Primary and Secondary Education Free of Charge”. No person has ever been denied the right to education and training on grounds of sex, social or national origin, political opinion, religion, race, colour, or age as the Government of Cyprus, is strongly opposed to such discrimination.

It is the long-standing policy and stance of the Ministry of Education and Culture that education is open and free to everybody, regardless of their financial situation, racial or ethnic origin, color, religion, belief or gender. Moreover, the Ministry takes several measures to ensure that all children and adults have easy access to life-long education, without excluding children with special needs, the illiterate or the elderly. Legislation provides for non-discrimination against children of migrant workers, hence securing their unobstructed access to education. The Attorney General has advised that the Constitution of Cyprus clearly states that the right to education is not confined by citizenship; therefore even the children of illegal immigrants are allowed to enroll in Cyprus schools, without meaning that their parents gain any rights through this.

As far as the education of children with special needs is concerned, the Ministry of Education and Culture has put into effect the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law (Law 113 (I) of 1999 to 2001 published in the Official Gazette of the Republic on 28 August 1999 and its amendment on 4 May 2001, and Regulations K.Δ.Π. 186/2001 published in the Official Gazette of the Republic on the same date), the Regulations regarding the Mechanisms for Early Detection of Children with Special Needs and the Regulations regarding the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs, which support the application of the Law. The Ministry of Education and Culture has enforced various programmes for Special Education to meet the educational and other needs of school children during these years. The needs of these children are satisfied by well-qualified teachers of various specialties (teachers for intellectual, emotional and other problems, the deaf, the blind, special gymnastics, music therapy, work therapy, speech therapy, educational psychology, audiology and physiotherapy).

Gender parity, in all aspects of the social and economic life, is a major concern of the E.U. generally and of Cyprus particularly. It is not until the recent years that Cyprus has begun to recognise that the existing gender inequalities are a problem that must be addressed through long term policies. Consequently, the Government has incorporated a gender mainstreaming strategy into its development plans and strategies. The Ministry of Education and Culture appreciates that it has a central role in addressing the issue of gender parity, which starts early and is cultivated by discriminatory social norms, legal institutions and educational practices. It therefore works towards eliminating all gender disparities in education, even though no discrimination on the basis of gender exists regarding access to and equality of education,

since all children aged 4 years and 8 months to 15 years are entitled to free and compulsory education, regardless of gender.

The curriculum has been revised over the previous years to address gender parity concerns and today both boys and girls attend similar subjects and carry out similar activities. Although there is no formal gender-based policy in education, teachers are instructed to address gender parity concerns and to nurture sensitivity on such issues, so that students learn early on the importance of equality. It is the aim of the Ministry of Education and Culture to make such re-organisations and improvements in the educational system, that all policies, mechanisms and structures will be informed by gender parity concerns. Nonetheless, this is a challenging task that would require clearly stated goals, the ability to include training and expertise along the process and the establishment of adequate institutional mechanisms.

Education in Cyprus has been going through important transformations in recent years, especially because of socio-cultural changes that have been taking place. Specifically, many children from foreign countries have been enrolling in primary and secondary schools in Cyprus over the last few years, calling for a dynamic response from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Consequently, the Ministry has taken up the responsibility of facilitating and supporting children with different cultural identities to manage their smooth integration and adjustment into a creative environment. Within the context of providing an intercultural education, the Ministry offers special educational programmes to both Cypriot children who return to Cyprus after living abroad and children of foreigners whose parents live in Cyprus. Moreover, the Ministry has published special books for teaching the Greek language as a second or foreign language to these students. Additional teaching periods are furthermore allowed to teachers for supporting students with literacy and learning problems and for effectively teaching Greek as a second language. Special emphasis is also given to the in-service training of the teaching staff so as to enable teachers to deal effectively with the specialised needs of these students.

The Ministry of Education and Culture takes every possible measure to support education in all areas of the island. Specific areas which mainly involve schools in remote rural areas, schools with low socioeconomic status and education in the occupied areas of the island are supported with extra measures. One of the measures adopted is the institution of the Educational Priority Zones, which is based on the concept of positive discrimination to ensure prevention of school failure and functional illiteracy. The Educational Priority Zones essentially ensure the provision of educational opportunities and pedagogical conditions for the success of all children and hence they exemplify good practice and are essential to the quality of compulsory education.

Moreover, based on a decision of the Council of Ministers, Turkish-Cypriot students enrolled in Greek schools are exempted from attending the subjects of Religious Education and History. During these periods the pupils have lessons in their own language and culture. The Ministry of Education and

Culture has also appointed three Turkish-Cypriot teachers in a primary school where the great majority of Turkish-Cypriot students are enrolled to cater for the specialized needs of this particular group. The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus has decided to establish a separate primary school in Lemesos for Turkish speaking students. All students and parents were asked at the beginning of the school year whether they would like to attend to this school and no one expressed such an interest but continued to enroll their children in the ordinary school, which Greek speaking pupils also attend.

The official policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture is to prohibit any action that violates the personal freedoms and convictions of the pupils (or to be more precise the parental religion of pupils) aiming at changing their religious beliefs. The vast majority of school children follow Greek-Orthodox religion courses. Children whose parents do not want them to attend religious education may ask for an exemption. Pupils over the age of sixteen may ask for an exemption directly. Non-Christian pupils may be exempted from Morning Prayer or church mass. Exemptions that are officially requested by parents or children over the age of sixteen are always granted and in all cases alternative courses are offered to children.

Secondary Technical-Vocational Education and Training in Cyprus is considered as a dynamic, continuous economic and social process, capable of offering equal opportunities for all, and as a mechanism to combat social exclusion and cultivate social integration. This type of education and training is available to all students through formal education and apprenticeship scheme programmes, and to all citizens, through various other programmes.

Formal technical-vocational education is free for all students. Certain fees are required for attending afternoon and evening training programs for adults, but these fees are kept low and are being subsidized by the Government.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has prepared a reform proposal for the public Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE), and new curricula have been introduced. The objectives proposed in the Ministry's proposal are in unison with the unified objectives proposed by UNESCO to its Member-States.

The revision of existing curricula and the development of new curricula for STVE, aims to promote the fulfillment of the needs and aspirations of students, to develop their self-respect and esteem and to prepare them to face life in the coming eras and enter the labour market. The new curricula envisage to build a positive attitude towards work and the working person and promote the reorganization of STVE in line with the new trends of vocational education in Europe.

The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance run an apprenticeship scheme jointly. The system is directed mainly towards young people who have not successfully completed their secondary school education (dropouts) and lasts for two years. Apprentices can enroll only if they are 15 years of age when enrolling and not over 18 at

the time of graduation. Practical training takes place in industry for three days each week. Their employers who are subsidized by the Human Resource Development Authority remunerate apprentices for their work. Theoretical classes and workshop practice are provided within the Technical Schools for two days each week.

About 200 Adult Education Centres operate in Cyprus. A broad spectrum of as many as 63 subjects is covered. The subjects include the Arts, Computer Studies, Foreign languages, Sociology, Fishing, Plumbing, Photography, Literature, Cooking, Knitting, Building, Auto repairs, Accounting, Public relations, Typing, Journalism, and many more. In recent years, there is focus on teaching foreign Languages and Multicultural Education. Since 2003, the Adult Education Centres offer free lessons in Turkish to Greek Cypriots and free lessons in Greek to Turkish Cypriots. In courses aimed at individuals without academic qualifications, the teaching methods used are more practical. The issue of the certificates offered by the Adult Education Centres is currently being reconsidered. At the Adult Education Centres certificates are awarded without examinations. The informal general courses are taught mainly by unemployed graduates with a diploma relevant to the course they teach and by people with specialised knowledge in their field (e.g. Dressmaking, Crafts, Dancing etc.).

Moreover, the principles of Global Education, which include citizenship, environmental, intercultural, differentiated, technological, cooperative, human rights and peace education, as well as lifelong learning and access to education, should be promoted on a more systematic and regular basis with an aim to develop students' literacy in all its forms.

By pursuing the above-mentioned principles and having as a purpose to cultivate key competencies for life, education in Cyprus aims at teaching the students how to collaborate and work effectively in groups to collect, discover, analyse, evaluate and compose information. Furthermore, students are expected to develop their critical and creative thinking and become active citizens; democratic, socially sensitive and respectful of both their own as well as other cultures and countries.

### **Question C**

**Please indicate the guarantees, including applicable sanctions and remedies, which prevent any discrimination in regard to members of workers' organisations at the time of engagement, promotion or dismissal.**

No change.

*Prohibition of forced labour*

**Question D**

**Please indicate whether any form of forced or compulsory labour is authorised or tolerated.**

No change.

**Question E**

**If so, please describe the nature and scope of any such labour and indicate the extent to which recourse has been had thereto during the reference period.**

No change.

**Question F**

**Please indicate what measures are being taken to secure the complete abolition of forced or compulsory labour and the date by which these measures will be fully implemented.**

No forced labour or compulsory work exists in Cyprus Prisons.

**Question G**

**Please give information concerning the conditions under which work is carried out in prison establishments.**

Every prisoner upon entry to Prison is presented in front of the Classification Committee which allocates him work which has an educational meaning. This process is embedded in the Cyprus Prison Law.

Every workshop in the prison has its own well educated supervisor who is a member of the staff or a citizen.

The prisoners' work must be in accord with their mental and physical abilities as these are set out by the medical officer.

The prisoners' work must aim at the creative exploitation of the time spent in prison, and must contribute to their vocational training and the maintenance or increase of their potential for employment after their release, and aim at their smooth reintegration in society.

The prisoners' work must not be painful, especially dangerous or unhealthy and must not constitute a suppressive measure or be of a punitive character.

Prisoners shall be given, to the extent possible, sufficient and useful work in such a manner as to cover daily all working hours. If that is not possible, the prisoners are occupied in other useful activities.

Every prisoner shall be employed, to the extent possible, in work of his specialization or inclination.

The maximum number of the prisoners' working hours on a daily and weekly basis shall be prescribed by the Minister (Prison Law) who takes into account the working hours of workers in the free market, as well as the timetable of the training programmes and the entertainment of prisoners in prison.

The prisoners must have at least one free day in a week and sufficient time to participate in training programmes and other activities, which are provided within the course of their treatment and training with the purpose of their smooth reintegration in society.

Prisoners shall work in the places of occupation that the Classification Committee places them and are not entitled to abandon their places of work without obtaining the prior approval of the competent officer.

The organisation and the methods of work must be similar, to the extent possible, to those of free society, so as to prepare the prisoners for the conditions of work they will meet after their release.

Safety measures which are prescribed for the safety and health of workers out of prison in free society are complied with in the Prison's work areas, while provision is made for the payment of compensation to prisoners in case of an industrial accident or sickness due to work, as laid down in the legislation for workers in free society.

Prisoners and especially young prisoners must be vocationally trained, to the extent possible, in wage earning occupations.

Since 1.1.2006, the work allowance being applied for each category is as follows:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Allowance per day</u>
A	£1.50
B	£1.20
C	£0.90
D	£0.70

The new entrance detainees are classified in class D according to their contact and industry. The classification committee will upgrade then according to their progress.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order will, as from 2008, increase wages by 30%. This has been included in the annual prison budget.

### **ARTICLE 1 PARA. 3**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work, the Parties undertake:*

*to establish or maintain free employment services for all workers;"*

### **Question A**

**Please describe the operation of free employment services available in your country, indicating the age, sex and nature of occupation of persons placed by them in employment and persons seeking employment.**

See Tables 13-15 in Appendix III.

**Please indicate as far as possible the number of vacancies, the placement rate and the duration of unemployment of persons placed.**

See Tables 13-14 and 16 in Appendix III.

### **Question B**

**Please describe the organisation of public employment services in your country indicating the accompanying measures for the unemployed, and where appropriate, the steps taken to revise the geographical distribution of local and regional employment centres and to redeploy resources when the changing patterns of economic activity and of population so warrant.**

It can be added that, in the framework of the Modernisation of the Public Employment Services, the following measures are being promoted:

- Improving the geographical access to services through the creation of 8 more Local Employment Offices and the upgrading of four District and two Local Employment Offices. In 2006, 1 District and 1 Local Employment Offices were upgraded.
- Since April of 2006, 18 specially trained Employment Counsellors provide individualised services to the unemployed.

### **Question C**

**If both public and private free employment services exist in your country, please describe the steps taken to co-ordinate such services, and to determine the conditions governing the operation of private employment agencies.**

No change.

#### **Question D**

**Please indicate whether and how the participation of representatives of employers and workers in the organisation and operation of the employment services and in the development of employment services policy is provided for.**

No change.

#### **Question E**

**Please indicate what legislation or administrative guarantees are provided to ensure that these services are available to all.**

No change.

#### **ARTICLE 1 PARA. 4**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work, the Parties undertake:*

*to provide or promote appropriate vocational guidance, training and rehabilitation."*

**Please indicate, illustrating with relevant data as far as possible, what measures have been taken to provide or promote:**

- a. vocational guidance;**
- b. vocational training;**
- c. vocational rehabilitation;**

**with the aim of giving everyone the possibility of earning his living in an occupation freely entered upon.**

See information given in the Reports on Articles 9, 10 and 15.

**Please indicate whether equal access is ensured for all those interested, including nationals of the other Contracting Parties to the Charter lawfully resident or working regularly in your territory, and disabled people.**

The HRDA's activities aim at continually upgrading and strengthening the career guidance services addressed to female pupils and students, as well as, to groups of women wishing to enter or re-enter the labour market. Training activities approved of and subsidized by the HRDA, with numbers of participants distributed by gender, for the years 2005 and 2006 are shown in Appendix I.

More information is provided in the Reports on Articles 9, 10 and 15.

**Replies of the Government of Cyprus to the questions raised  
by the European Committee of Social Rights on article 1**

General Questions

**Question 36**

A Bill against terrorism is pending before our House of Representatives. Nevertheless, the Republic of Cyprus deals with ordinary criminal offences under the Criminal Code (Cap.154), which provides that if criminal offences are committed with terrorist motivation, they can be considered as acts of terrorism. Moreover, supplementary legislation against terrorist acts can be used, such as Explosive Substances Law (Cap.54), the Extradition of Fugitive Offenders Law of 1970, European Convention on Extradition (Ratification) Law of 1970, Firearms Law of 2004, the Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition (Ratification) Law of 1979, the Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition (Ratification) Law of 1984, International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (Ratification) Law of 1993, the Crime Suppression (Controlled Delivery and other Special Provisions) Law of 1995, the Prevention and Suppression of Money Laundering Activities, Law of 1996, the Protection of the Secrecy of Private Communication (Surveillance of Communication), Law of 1996, the Aliens & Immigration Unit enforces and implements the Aliens & Immigration Law Cap.105 as amended by Laws of 1974-2004 and the Aliens and Immigration Regulations of 1972-2002, International Convention in Criminal Matters, Law of 2001 and the Protection of Witnesses, Law of 2001.

**Question 37**

See answer to Question G above.

**Question 38**

Please see information given under Questions A-E above.

Cyprus Conclusions

Article 1§2

**1.Nationals of Contracting Parties to the 1961 Charter and of States Parties to the Revised Charter who are lawfully resident in Cyprus can only be employed if no citizen of Cyprus can be recruited for the same post. This condition constitutes direct discrimination on grounds of nationality.**

Nationals of Contracting Parties to the 1961 Charter and of States Parties to the Revised Charter who are lawfully resident in Cyprus and their status of residency entitles them to employment in Cyprus are treated on equal basis with Cypriot Nationals without any sort of discrimination.

**2. The duration of alternative service, which generally lasts twice as long as compulsory military service, amounts to a disproportionate restriction on the right of workers to earn their living in an occupation freely entered upon.**

The legal framework which governs the military service of the conscientious objectors has been revised with an amendment brought about to the Law of the National Guard in the year 2007. According to the new provisions of the aforesaid Law, the duration of the service of conscientious objectors has been reduced as follows:

- a. for those who were to do a twenty-five (25) month military service, they will do an “alternate service”, the duration of which will be thirty-four (34) instead of forty-two (42) months.
- b. For those who were to do a special military service, they will do an “alternate service”, the duration of which will be thirty (30) instead of thirty-four (34) months.
- c. For those who were to do a reduced military service, the augmentation in the duration of the “alternate service” will be reduced accordingly.

The duration of the alternate service of the conscientious objectors is reasonable and proportionate in comparison with the duration of the military service to be done by the other conscripts.

Taking into consideration the particular situation that exists in Cyprus due to the continuous occupation of a part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus by the Turkish army, we consider that the above mentioned amended provisions of the Law are in line with the international standards for the protection of human rights.

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APPENDIX I

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CYPRUS**

**TABLE OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2005**

TRAINING ACTIVITIES	Programmes (*)	Trainees		
		Male (**)	Female (**)	Total
<i>INITIAL TRAINING</i>	<b>170</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>1.040</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>80</b>
• Standard training	7	6	8	14
• Management training of tertiary-education graduates	68	42	24	66

<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>960</b>
• Apprenticeship System	44	271	-	271
• Practical training of secondary school hotel-section students	14	141	76	217
• Practical training of HHIC students	7	34	30	64
• Practical training of HTI students	4	59	13	72
• Accelerated Training Programmes	26	325	11	336
<b>CONTINUING TRAINING</b>	<b>4.973</b>	<b>31.024</b>	<b>22.302</b>	<b>53.326</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>3.966</b>	<b>22.067</b>	<b>16.744</b>	<b>38.811</b>
• Standard training programmes in Cyprus	3.315	21.563	16.597	38.160
• Training abroad	651	504	147	651
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>1.007</b>	<b>8.957</b>	<b>5.558</b>	<b>14.515</b>
• Standard training programmes	865	6.544	4.560	11.104
• High-priority training programmes	45	490	224	714
• Trade Union Programmes	96	1.904	768	2.672
• Training abroad	1	19	6	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.143</b>	<b>31.902</b>	<b>22.464</b>	<b>54.366</b>

\* Figures for 2005 refer to programmes for which subsidies were paid during the year.

\*\* Figures for male and female trainees are estimates

*TABLE OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2006*

TRAINING ACTIVITIES	Programmes (*)	Trainees		
		Male (**)	Female (**)	Total
<b>INITIAL TRAINING</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>1.188</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>159</b>
• Standard training	9	34	45	79
• Management training of tertiary-education graduates	85	50	30	80
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>1.029</b>
• Apprenticeship System	41	212	-	212
• Practical training of secondary school hotel-section students	14	135	73	208

• Practical training of HHIC students	10	81	72	153
• Practical training of HTI students	4	53	12	65
• MIM	1	2	1	3
• Accelerated Training Programmes	30	379	9	388
<b>CONTINUING TRAINING</b>	<b>4.979</b>	<b>33.504</b>	<b>23.668</b>	<b>57.172</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>3.680</b>	<b>21.248</b>	<b>16.185</b>	<b>37.433</b>
• Standard training programmes in Cyprus	3.223	20.894	16.082	36.976
• Training abroad	457	354	103	457
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>1.299</b>	<b>12.256</b>	<b>7.483</b>	<b>19.739</b>
• Standard training programmes	1.103	8.565	5.969	14.534
• High-priority training programmes	50	544	249	793
• Trade Union Programmes	143	3.111	1.255	4.366
• Direct involvement of HRDA	2	11	10	21
• Training abroad	1	25	0	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.173</b>	<b>34.450</b>	<b>23.910</b>	<b>58.360</b>

\* Figures for 2006 refer to programmes for which subsidies were paid during the year.

\*\* Figures for male and female trainees are estimates

# GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

## Report on

### Article 9 of the Revised European Social Charter

#### THE RIGHT TO VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

(Reference Period 01.01.2005 – 31.12.2006)

#### **ARTICLE 9**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational guidance, the Parties undertake to provide or promote, as necessary, a service which will assist all persons, including the handicapped, to solve problems related to occupational choice and progress, with due regard to the individual's characteristics and their relation to occupational opportunity: this assistance should be available free of charge, both to young persons, including schoolchildren, and to adults."*

#### **Question A**

**Please give a description of the service - its functions, organisation and operation - specifying in particular:**

**a. whether access to services is free of charge;**

No change.

**b. whether vocational guidance work is carried out in the public or private sectors;**

No change.

**c. the measures taken to supply all persons with adequate information on the choice of employment;**

The following may be added:

(i) Public Employment Services (PES)

In the framework of the Enhancement and Modernisation of the Public Employment Services, 18 Employment Counsellors, which were specially

trained, provide personalised services to job seekers. This personalised approach is based on the recording of the personal characteristics, skills, knowledge and employment aspirations of each job seeker and it leads to the formation and implementation of a Personal Action Plan. Through this process, the job seeker receives the necessary vocational guidance and he/she is guided to either an appropriate job placement, or further enhancement of his/her knowledge and skills.

Vocational Guidance is also provided by other Officers of the District and Local Labour Offices.

Also, an Operational Unit of Employment Consultants was hired to provide personalised services to job seekers and to train the Employment Counsellors.

**d. the measures taken to ensure a close link between vocational guidance and training on the one hand and employment on the other<sup>6</sup>;**

See Cyprus Report on Article 10.

**e. the measures in hand for improving the services;**

The following may be added:

**(i) Public Employment Services (PES)**

In the framework of the Enhancement and Modernisation of the Public Employment Services, the geographical access to services is being improved through the creation of 8 more Local Employment Offices and the upgrading of four District and two Local Employment Offices. In 2006, 1 District and 1 Local Employment Offices were upgraded.

See also information given under c above.

**f. the details of special measures to assist disabled persons.**

See Cyprus Report on Article 15.

**Question B**

**Please indicate the measures taken in the field of vocational guidance to promote occupational and social advancement.**

**(i) Public Employment Services (PES)**

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<sup>6</sup> If your country has accepted Article 10 para. 1, it is not necessary to describe these measures here.

See information given under Question A.

(ii) Counselling and Career Education Service (C.C.E.S) of the Ministry of Education and Culture;

### **Question C**

**Please indicate the types of information available in the vocational guidance services and the means employed to disseminate this information.**

(i) Public Employment Services (PES)

See information given under Question A.

### **Question D**

**Please indicate:**

**a. the total amount of public expenditure devoted to vocational guidance services during the reference period;**

(i) Public Employment Services (PES)

The amount paid in 2006 to the Operational Unit of Employment Consultants was CYP£230.374.

The amount paid for the salaries of Employment Consultants in 2006 was CYP£197.914.

Vocational Guidance is also provided by other Officers of the District and Local Labour Offices, but this expenditure cannot be estimated because these Officers also provide placement services.

(ii) C.C.E.S. of the Ministry of Education and Culture

The total amount of expenditure during the reference period devoted to vocational guidance by the Counseling and Career Education Services (C.C.E.S.) of the Ministry of Education and Culture is estimated approximately at CYP 3.200.000 and represents costs for salaries, for the publication and distribution of books and for the organization of seminars, training programs and conferences.

**b. the number of specialised staff of the vocational guidance services and their qualifications (teachers, psychologists, administrators, etc.);**

(i) Public Employment Services (PES)

See information given under Question A.

(ii) C.C.E.S. of the Ministry of Education and Culture

The C.C.E.S. personnel consisted of 109 teachers of Counseling and Career Education for 2003-2004. The qualifications for those posts are:

- a university degree in any specialization for Secondary Education (General Secondary and Technical Secondary Education)
- a postgraduate degree in Counseling and/or Career Education/Guidance of at least one academic year's duration (Masters and/or Postgraduate Diploma).

The C.C.E. period-student ratio continued to be as follows:

Gymnasiums

One (1) period for 60 pupils

Half (0,5) a period for the teaching of Career Education Course in the 9th grade.

Lyceums

10th grade: Three (3) periods for every 50 pupils

11th grade: One (1) period for 50 pupils

12th grade: One (1) period for 50 pupils

Technical Schools

10th grade: Three (3) periods for every 50 pupils

11th grade: One (1) period for 50 pupils

12th grade: One (1) period for 50 pupils

Four (4) periods for orientation purposes

**c. the number of persons benefiting from vocational guidance broken down by age, sex and educational background;**

(i) Public Employment Services (PES)

The number of persons benefiting from vocational guidance by PES is roughly estimated as the number of job seekers registered at the District Labour Offices. See information provided in Appendix I.

Specifically, 1.085 people were provided with personalized services (see information given under Question A) during 2006.

(ii) C.C.E.S. of the Ministry of Education and Culture

- All the 9th grade students in public schools were helped through the teaching of the Career Education course.
- Additionally, all the students of public secondary schools were helped through individual guidance and counseling:

Gymnasiums: 18,562 students were helped in 2005-2006 representing 66,38% of the student population.

Lyceum and Technical Schools: 22,147 in 2005-2006 students were helped representing 78,67% of the student population.

Please see below the percentages of boys and girls, who have benefited from C.C.E.S. during the years covered by the Report, on the total number of boys and girls respectively in the Public Secondary System.

2005-2006    - boys: 72,68%  
                  - girls: 50,69%

In 2005-2006 3,975 persons visited the central offices; 1246 were students of public and/or private secondary education schools, 1292 were secondary education graduates, 917 were tertiary education students and 520 were tertiary education graduates.

**d. the geographical and institutional distribution of vocational guidance services.**

(i) Public Employment Services (PES)

See information given under Question A.

**Question E**

**Please indicate whether equality of access to vocational guidance is ensured for all those interested, including nationals of the other Contracting Parties to the Charter lawfully resident or working regularly in your territory, and disabled persons.**

No change.

**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**  
**Report on**  
**Article 10**  
**of the Revised European Social Charter**

**THE RIGHT TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING**  
**(Reference Period 01.01.2005 – 31.12.2006)**

**ARTICLE 10 PARA. 1**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational training, the Parties undertake:*

*to provide or promote, as necessary, the technical and vocational training of all persons, including the handicapped, in consultation with employers' and*

*workers' organisations, and to grant facilities for access to higher technical and university education, based solely on individual aptitude;"*

### **Question A**

**Please give an account of the functions, organisation, operation and financing of the services designed to provide vocational training for all persons including those with disabilities<sup>7</sup>, specifying in particular:**

**a. the rules laid down by legislation, collective agreements or carried out otherwise;**

In the field of secondary education, the legislative provisions are scattered through many pieces of legislation passed since 1960, the year Cyprus was proclaimed an independent state. The set of laws, which cover pre-primary, primary, secondary general and secondary technical and vocational education are 5/71, 56/83, 123/85 and 154(I)/99.

For a full account of the vocational training system in Cyprus please see our report for the reporting period 2001 – 2002.

**b. the total amount of public expenditure devoted to vocational training;**

During the fiscal year of 2005, the development expenditure on Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) reached the amount of £5.395.000, compared to £4.590.000 in 2004. The current expenditure for the same year was £2.143.000, compared to £1.660.000 in 2004.

The total amount of public expenditure on STVE for the fiscal year of 2005 reached the amount of £7.538.000.

Overall expenditure by the **Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA)**, which is the national agency for training and development, on human resource training and development activities over the two-year period 2005-2006 amounted to more than Cyprus £12.9 m. or over € 21.7 m. Annual expenditure is shown below:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Expenditure</u> <u>CYPRUS £</u>	<u>EURO €</u>
2005	6.461.708	10.832.704
2006	6.501.739	10.899.813
Total	12.963.447	21.732.517

**c. the number of vocational and technical training institutions (at elementary and advanced levels);**

There are twelve Public Technical and Vocational Schools operating in the government-controlled area of Cyprus. There are three Schools in Nicosia,

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<sup>7</sup> If your country has accepted Article 15, it is not necessary to describe the services for persons with disabilities here.

three in Limassol, two in Larnaca, two in the free area of the Famagusta district, one in Pafos and one in Polis. There is also one Hotel and Catering department at Apeitio Gymnasium in Agros. There is also one Evening Technical School operating in Nicosia.

Training is provided by some 150 public and private institutions/providers, employing more than 750 people. In addition, enterprises offer in-company training to their employees.

**d. the number of teachers in such schools in the last school year;**

The number of secondary school teachers, teaching subjects of general education at Secondary Technical and Vocational Schools, was 256. Some work on a full-time basis and some on a part-time basis. Full-time teachers teaching technical and vocational education subjects totalled 456.

The number of teachers for the Afternoon and Evening Classes offered at Technical Schools was 115, of who 15 were full-time.

**e. the number of pupils, full-time and part-time in such schools in the last school year.**

During the 2004-2005 school year, the number of pupils studying in the various programmes offered by STVE was as follows:

<b>Programme</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Formal Technical and Vocational Programmes	4370
Apprenticeship Scheme	473
Afternoon and Evening Classes	1360
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5203</b>

**Question B**

**Please indicate how the arrangements for vocational training are provided with reference to the various types of vocational activity and, if data are available, to age and to sex.**

Vocational Education and Training includes all types of education and training that give people the qualifications needed to enter the labour market and to work in certain jobs. There is no formal or legal definition of VET in Cyprus. Vocational Education and Training in Cyprus is provided through the Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, the Apprenticeship Scheme, the Afternoon and Evening Classes of Technical Schools, the training programmes subsidized by the Human Resource Development Authority and the public institutions of tertiary education.

The Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education is responsible for planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating the educational programmes that are offered at Public Technical and Vocational Schools. The Director of STVE reports directly to the Director General of the

Ministry of Education and Culture. There are two Chief Education Officers, one of who is assigned as Head Inspector, who supervise the work of five STVE School Inspectors.

Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education is offered in two directions, the Theoretical Direction and the Practical Direction. The duration of studies is three years for each direction. The first year of studies is common for the branch in each direction and pupils select a specialization offered in the branch of their choice in the second and third year of their studies.

Graduates of both directions are awarded a Leaving Certificate (Apolyterion), which is equivalent to that obtained from other Public Schools of Secondary General Education and entitles them either to pursue further studies at Institutions of Higher and Tertiary Education, or enter the labour market as skilled workers.

The Theoretical Direction is completely school-based and combines general education subjects with technological and workshop subjects.

The first and second year of the Practical Direction are completely school-based and combine general education subjects with technological and workshop subjects. The third year of studies in the Practical Direction combines a school-based environment with a real workplace and final-year pupils are placed in industry for one day per week, where they follow a practical training programme.

Apart from the schools mentioned in Question A(c), there is also one Evening Technical School, which has been operating in Nicosia since September 1999. The school accepts persons of all ages who wish to complete a course of study at Technical Schools. The programmes offered at the Evening Technical School are equivalent to the mainstream STVE programmes. The material taught in each branch and specialty is the same as the material taught in the respective branch/specialty of the morning classes, adapted, however, to the particular characteristics and needs of the pupils who attend evening classes. The duration of studies varies from one to four years, depending on the educational level of those interested in attending evening TVE programmes. Attendance is free and leads to the acquisition of a Leaving Certificate (Apolyterion), which is equivalent to that awarded by mainstream Technical and Vocational Schools.

The Apprenticeship Scheme is another form of initial vocational education, which accepts pupils who drop out between grades eight and ten. Participants are pupils of 14 to 18 years of age. The programme lasts for two years and is a combination of general education and vocational training, offered at Technical Schools for two days per week, with practical training in industry, where apprentices are remunerated for their work, for three days per week. The Scheme is run jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. Upon completing the two-year programme successfully, apprentices are awarded a professional certificate, which entitles them to enter the labour market as semi-skilled workers. This

certificate is not equivalent to the Leaving Certificates awarded to graduates of upper secondary education (general or technical and vocational) and does not entitle apprentices to pursue further studies at Institutions of Higher and Tertiary Education.

Technical and Vocational Education Programmes as well as preparatory classes for various examinations, are offered by the Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education during the afternoon and evening on the premises of Technical Schools in all major towns in the government-controlled area of Cyprus. The objective of the Afternoon and Evening Classes of Technical Schools is to offer continuing education and training to adults working in industry, in order to be able to respond more efficiently to the contemporary demands of the labour market, as well as training aiming at the re-integration of unemployed individuals into the labour market, in sectors where there is shortage of skilled workers.

Finally, the HRDA approves and subsidizes multi-company initial training programmes organised in cooperation with training institutions, enterprise-based initial training and the practical training of students of certain specializations in public secondary and tertiary education institutions. The HRDA also co-funds the Apprenticeship Scheme.

Training activities approved of and subsidized by the **HRDA**, with numbers of participants, distributed by gender, for the years 2005 and 2006 are shown in Appendix I.

### **Question C**

**Please state what measures are taken to ensure a close link between vocational guidance and training on the one hand and employment on the other.**

The third year of studies in the Practical Stream combines a school-based environment with one day per week (equivalent to seven periods) of work experience, where pupils follow a practical training programme. The industrial placement aims to provide pupils with specialised knowledge and skills gained under actual working conditions. In this way the programme contributes to the pupils' smooth transition from school to work, the consolidation and implementation of the skills and competencies learned at school, the development of the professional ethics, attitudes and values required in the labour market and society in general and the creation of closer ties between the education and industrial training systems.

The policies, programmes and activities of the **HRDA** are aimed to reduce skill mismatches, improve mobility, provide increased opportunities for employment, widen the choice of career opportunities and facilitate the continuing training throughout working life to those already in employment, young people and those out of work, thereby supporting, encouraging and promoting lifelong learning. Emphasis is placed on facilitating the transition to

the knowledge-and skills –based society, while improving the quantity and quality in employment and minimizing exclusion and poverty.

#### **Question D**

**Please indicate the methods adopted by your government with a view to providing access to higher technical education and university education on the basis of the sole criterion of individual aptitude.**

The Examination Service of the Ministry of Education and Culture organises and supervises the annual examinations for entry to the Public Institutions of Higher and Tertiary Education in Cyprus and Greece. A new integrated system, starting as from 2006, is aiming at integrating the Secondary Education final written examinations that lead to the "Apolyterion" and the "Entrance Examinations" into the combined "Pancyprian Examinations". The "Pancyprian Examinations" will take place in late May and early June. The aim of the "Pancyprian Examinations" will be twofold: the acquisition of the "Apolyterion" and the acquisition of eligibility for admission to the Higher Education Institutions in Cyprus, based on the "Average Allocating Score". Placement of the candidates to the respective Institutions of Greece will also be based on this "Average Allocating Score".

#### **Question E**

**Please indicate whether equality of access to vocational training opportunities is ensured for all those interested, including nationals of the other Contracting Parties to the Charter lawfully resident or working regularly in your territory, and disabled persons.**

Regardless of their nationality, race, gender, religion or physical disability, all pupils who have completed the third year of Gymnasium successfully and have obtained a Leaving Certificate, are eligible to study in mainstream STVE. In addition, pupils who come from other countries or from private English schools can attend STVE programmes, provided that they succeed in the special entrance exams. On their completing the programmes successfully, pupils are awarded a Leaving Certificate (Apolyterion), which is equivalent to that obtained from Upper Secondary General Education Schools.

Equality of access to vocational training for all is ensured by both the law and policies of the **HRDA**. The participation in training activities approved of and subsidized by the HRDA of nationals other than Cypriots is governed by the same conditions and regulations as for Cypriots.

#### **ARTICLE 10 PARA. 2**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational training, the Parties undertake:*

*to provide or promote a system of apprenticeship and other systematic arrangements for training young boys and girls in their various employments."*

### **Question A**

**Please give an account of the legal framework and the functions, organisation, operation and financing of apprenticeships and/or other systems for training young boys and girls in various jobs in your country.**

The Apprenticeship Scheme has been in operation since 1963. The Apprenticeship Law of 1966 is the basic law that governs the operation of the Apprenticeship Scheme.

The Apprenticeship Scheme is a two-year initial vocational education and training programme providing practical and theoretical training to young people who do not wish to continue their studies within the formal upper secondary education system when they finish the third year of gymnasium, but wish to be trained and employed in technical occupations. Pupils who have finished the second year of gymnasium are also accepted to enrol in the Apprenticeship Scheme. Pupils must be at least fourteen to be accepted in the Apprenticeship Scheme and must not be over eighteen at the time of graduation. The Apprenticeship Scheme is not compulsory and attendance is free of charge.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the vocational education and training of the apprentices at Technical Schools and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance is responsible for the administration of the Apprenticeship Scheme. The HRDA compensates employers for wages paid to apprentices while attending classes at Technical Schools, thus securing the support of enterprises in this part of the Scheme.

The main objectives of the Apprenticeship Scheme are:

- To offer training to young people working in industry
- To increase the number of semi-skilled workers in industry
- To raise the technical level of young workers in industry, according to modern notions of production.

The professional certificate awarded to the apprentices who complete the two-year programme successfully equips graduates with one type of qualification only (one occupational field) and entitles them to enter the labour market as semi-skilled workers. This professional certificate is not equivalent to the Leaving Certificate awarded to graduates of upper secondary education schools (general or technical and vocational). Therefore, it does not entitle

apprentices to pursue further studies at Institutions of Higher and Tertiary Education. However, it is recognized by the Government, industry and employers' organizations. This certificate is also recognized as being equal to the certificate issued by the Lower Technical Schools in Greece. In some cases, employers regard this certificate as the minimum qualification required.

## APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACTS

Apprentices submit their application forms to Technical and Vocational Schools or to the District Labour Offices. The competent officers employed at the District Labour Offices and the Apprenticeship Scheme inspectors are responsible for the industrial placement of apprentices.

According to the Apprenticeship Law of 1966, an apprenticeship contract is signed between the employer, the apprentice and his/her parent/guardian, where the employer is committed to provide practical training and allow the apprentice to attend theoretical classes and workshops for two days a week at Technical Schools. The Human Resource Development Authority subsidizes employers for wages paid to apprentices during the two days per week when they attend classes at Technical Schools.

The apprenticeship contract also includes some standard elements, for example wages, the apprentices' maximum working hours and weekly rest time. The apprenticeship contracts do not vary according to the sector of training, but the same apprenticeship contract is used for all sectors.

The enterprises that provide apprenticeship must have adequate facilities to provide on the job training and competent supervisors or instructors, for the implementation of the approved curricula.

Since 1/1/2006, by decision of the Council of Ministers, the Cyprus Productivity Centre has become the competent authority for managing the Apprenticeship Scheme with a mandate to introduce improvements to the existing scheme and to design a New Modern Apprenticeship.

In addition, the training of young people is also facilitated through **HRDA'** s other training activities and schemes, such as the initial training programmes, addressed to unskilled, secondary school-leavers and new entrants into the labour market for meeting needs in occupations where are significant labour shortages, and the schemes for strengthening the management capacity of enterprises, addressed to young unemployed university and college graduates. Other training activities, aimed at those already in employment for meeting upgrading and upskilling needs, are also available to young people.

In addition, one of HRDA' s schemes provides for the practical training of students and school-students, with the aim of acquisition of practical knowledge and skills by these in order to enable their smooth entry into the labour market.

In the years under review, 2005 and 2006, the HRDA subsidized the apprenticeship training of 271 and 212 apprentices, respectively, while subsidies to companies employing apprentices amounted to the sum of £168.409 and £164.046 in 2006 and 2005, respectively. During the same years, the HRDA subsidised the practical training of 749 students and school-students in companies with the amount of £310.963.

Moreover, the HRDA during the period under review has organized five new Schemes, for the promotion of the training and employability of (a) the unemployed (b) young school leavers (c) the inactive females (d) the computer illiterate unemployed and (e) the improvement of the operation of micro-enterprises employing 1 – 4 employees through the provision of Consultancy services. These five Schemes are co-funded by the European Social Fund. It is expected that the Schemes will commence in 2007 and be implemented early 2008.

### **Question B**

**Please give an account of the measures taken to implement this provision, stating approximately, if possible, the number of young persons benefiting from training systems.**

#### **THE APPRENTICESHIP BOARD**

According to the Apprenticeship Law of 1966, the Apprenticeship Board is responsible for supervising the operation of the Scheme. The Apprenticeship Board has tripartite character with representation from the Government, Technical Schools, Employers' and Employees' Organisations, the Cyprus Productivity Centre and the Human Resource Development Authority. The members of the Board are appointed by the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance for a 2-year period and are responsible for coordinating and organizing the procedure for the provision of industrial training to apprentices. The Board adjourns at least once a year in order to assess the operation of the Scheme during the previous school year and determine which specializations will be offered during the next school year.

#### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM COMMITTEES**

There are various Committees responsible for each specialization that supervise the implementation of the Apprenticeship Scheme. The members of these Committees submit their suggestions about problems that may arise in relation to the revision of the curricula and the industrial placement of apprentices. The members of these Committees are appointed by the Apprenticeship Board for a two-year term.

#### **APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM INSPECTORS**

The Minister of Labour and Social Insurance appoints inspectors on an annual basis, one in each district and for each specialization, in order to ensure both the quality and the quantity of the apprentices' practical training in industry. Their main task is to follow up the progress made by the apprentices, and assist the instructors from the industry in the implementation of the approved curricula, which take into account industry requirements. The inspectors

appointed are teachers employed at Technical Schools and are obliged to visit the trainees at their workplace on a regular basis. Apprentices can apply to inspectors in order to discuss and solve all the problems that might arise from their education in Technical Schools or their training in industry.

Table 1: Gross Participation Rates in the Apprenticeship Scheme

School year	Gross Participation rates considering population aged 16-19	Gross Participation rates considering population aged 15-17 (most relevant age group)
1990/91	2.3%	3.2%
1995/96	1.8%	2.3%
2000/01	1.4%	1.8%
2002/03	1.2%	1.6%

<sup>(1)</sup> Gross Participation Rates: Total number of apprentices in the programmes irrespective of age are divided by the population in the age group of interest.

Table 2: Number of participants in the Apprenticeship Scheme by gender (Data not available by age)

School year	Apprenticeship System		
	Male	Female	Total
1990/91	720	92	812
1995/96	651	44	695
2000/01	622	0	622
2002/03	533	5	538

Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus

In early 2006, a work group was set up to propose improvements to the existing apprenticeship scheme as well as a technical committee to prepare a proposal for a New Modern Apprenticeship. The Ministries of Labour and Social Insurance and Education and Culture are represented in both bodies as well as the Planning Bureau and the Human Resource Development Authority. The social partners participated in the design of the New Modern Apprenticeship through the process of social dialogue. The number of registrations to the apprenticeship scheme in 2004/2005 reached 478 while in 2005/2006 it dropped to 399. Of those registered only 159 and 116 respectively, were granted a certificate after successful completion of their apprenticeships.

See also information given under Question A.

### **Question C**

**Please indicate how the arrangements for vocational training are divided between the various types of vocational activity.**

The Apprenticeship Scheme programmes provide practical and theoretical training alternately. Practical training takes place in industry, where apprentices are remunerated for their work, for three days per week. The teaching time devoted to the industrial placement of apprentices facilitates their smooth entry to the labour market. Theoretical training is provided at Technical Schools for two days per week. During the two days spent at school apprentices take the following subjects for both years of their study: 1 period in Greek language, 2 periods in mathematics, 3 periods in technology, 2 periods in drawing and 5 periods in workshops/laboratory work.

At present, the following trades are operating under the Apprenticeship Scheme:

- Welders/plumbers.
- Auto mechanics.
- Auto electricians.
- Furniture makers.
- Electricians.
- Builders.
- Welders.

Participants are free to choose their specialization from those offered. The specializations are determined every year according to the needs of the industry and the availability of workshops, equipment and teaching staff in Technical Schools. Certain specialisations, due to the above reason, are only available in specific areas.

For a description of the vocational training system in Cyprus please see our previous report of 2000 – 2001 and the attached tables of training activities in Appendix I.

#### **Question D**

**Please describe any measures under which private apprenticeship schemes are assisted out of public funds.**

Currently, there are no private apprenticeship schemes assisted out of public funds.

#### **Question E**

**Please indicate whether the measures described are applicable to all categories of young boys and girls likely to benefit from and wishing to undertake apprenticeship or vocational training. If this is not the case, please give an estimate of the proportion of those not covered and, if possible, indicate the categories concerned.**

Pupils must be at least fourteen to be accepted in the Apprenticeship Scheme and must not be over eighteen at the time of graduation. The Apprenticeship Scheme is not compulsory and attendance is free of charge.

Over the years the apprenticeship scheme has become less attractive to young people and this is reflected both in the falling numbers of annual registrations as well as the increasing numbers who drop out before completing their apprenticeship. An additional problem is that the current scheme offers opportunities for apprenticeships in traditionally male-dominated professions and, therefore, attracts very few girls.

### **Question F**

**Please indicate whether equality of access to apprenticeship training is ensured for all those interested, including nationals of the other Contracting Parties to the Charter lawfully resident or working regularly in your territory, and disabled persons.**

Regardless of their nationality, race, gender, religion or physical disability, all pupils who do not wish to continue their studies within the formal upper secondary education system when they finish the third year of gymnasium, but wish to be trained and employed in technical occupations, can attend the Apprenticeship Scheme programmes. Pupils who have finished the second year of gymnasium are also accepted to enrol in the Apprenticeship Scheme.

### **ARTICLE 10 PARA. 3**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational training, the Parties undertake:*

*to provide or promote, as necessary:*

- a. adequate and readily available training facilities for adult workers;*
- b. special facilities for the retraining of adult workers needed as a result of technological development or new trends in employment;"*

### **Question A**

**Please give details of the facilities provided for the training and retraining of adult workers, in particular the arrangements for retraining redundant workers and workers affected by economic and technological change.**

### Afternoon and Evening Classes of Technical Schools

Technical and Vocational Education Programmes, as well as preparatory classes for various examinations, are offered by the Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education during the afternoon and evening on the premises of Technical Schools. No qualifications are required and the methods used vary, depending on the programme to be followed by the trainees.

The objective of the Afternoon and Evening Classes of Technical Schools is to offer continuing education and training to adults working in industry, in order to be able to respond more efficiently to the contemporary demands of the labour market, as well as training aiming at the re-integration of unemployed individuals into the labour market, in sectors where there is shortage of skilled workers.

Preparatory classes for various examinations are offered to pupils of mainstream STVE, as well as to adults. They cover a range of subjects and aim at:

- Preparing pupils or graduates of mainstream STVE for the entrance examinations to Institutions of Higher and Tertiary Education in Cyprus and abroad
- Preparing pupils and adults for various examinations required by governmental and semi-governmental organizations, for purposes of recognition of vocational qualifications or for the issue of a professional license.

All the classes are flexibly organized to accommodate working individuals who may wish to attend either one-year or two-year programmes that lead to the acquisition of a certificate, or longer programmes, lasting for three years, that may lead to the acquisition of a certificate that is equivalent to the School Leaving Certificate (Apolyterion) awarded by Technical Schools, as far as the technical component is concerned.

About 115 instructors and experts from industry teach these programmes on an overtime basis.

The vocational training system in Cyprus expressly provides for the training and retraining of adult workers. So, please see the tables of training activities in Appendix I.

### **Question B**

**Please indicate how the arrangements for vocational training are divided between the various types of vocational activity.**

See information given under Question A.

### **Question C**

**Please state whether the measures described are applicable to all categories of interested workers likely to benefit from and in need of training or retraining facilities. If this is not the case, please give an estimate of the proportion of those not covered and, if appropriate, give details of the categories concerned.**

CVET programmes are mainly targeted at the following groups of people:

1. Working individuals or unemployed people who have not completed successfully Lower Secondary Education (dropouts) and wish to acquire knowledge and skills in order to improve their employment prospects. Individuals belonging in this target group are given the opportunity to attend:

- The Afternoon and Evening Classes of Technical Schools

2. Working individuals or unemployed people who have completed successfully Lower Secondary Education and wish to acquire technical knowledge and skills, or even an Upper Secondary Education Leaving Certificate (Apolyterion) equivalent to that awarded by Technical Schools (mainstream STVE). Individuals belonging in this target group can attend:

- The Evening Technical School
- The Afternoon and Evening Classes of Technical Schools

3. Working individuals or unemployed people who have completed successfully Upper Secondary Education and hold a School Leaving Certificate (Apolyterion) awarded either by General Education Schools or Technical Schools (mainstream STVE) and wish to be trained and obtain a certificate in a specialty other than their original one. Individuals belonging in this target group can attend:

- The Evening Technical School
- The Afternoon and Evening Classes of Technical Schools

See also information given under Question A.

### **Question D**

**Please indicate the approximate number of adult workers who have participated in training or retraining measures.**

The Afternoon and Evening Technical and Vocational Education Programmes, as well as the preparatory classes for various examinations, are currently attended by about 1360 individuals, mostly working ones.

See also information given under Question A.

### **Question E**

**Please describe special measures to assist adult women wishing to take up or resume employment.**

As indicated by the figures shown in the tables of training activities approved and subsidized by the **HRDA**, the proportion of women participants in training activities was around 41% in both 2005 and 2006, which is at the same levels as in the European Union.

The HRDA in pursuit of its non-discriminatory, positive action policies, promotes activities and measures that aim to narrow the gap in training participations between women and men, always within the framework of its mission i.e. to meet the economy's needs for well trained human resources. Activities and measures are established through research studies and surveys.

The HRDA has also included as it was mentioned above a new pioneering scheme, for the promotion of the training and employability of the economically inactive female labour force, in the Single Programming Document for Objective 3 of the European Social Fund concerning human resources. The new scheme is expected to be implemented in 2007 and 2008 and will offer training to some 800 economically inactive women.

### **Question F**

**Please indicate whether equality of access to adult training and retraining is ensured for all those interested, including nationals of the other Contracting Parties to the Charter lawfully resident or working regularly in your territory, and disabled persons.**

Equality of access to adult training and retraining is ensured for all those interested, including nationals of other Contracting Parties to the Charter lawfully resident or working regularly in Cyprus, and disabled persons.

Please see also reply to Question E, Para.1 above.

### **ARTICLE 10 PARA. 4**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational training, the Parties undertake;*

*to provide or promote, as necessary, special measures for the retraining and reintegration of the long-term unemployed;"*

**Please indicate the special measures taken to provide or promote the retraining and reintegration of long-term unemployed, including as far as possible information on the number of participants and the results achieved.**

The vocational training system in Cyprus provides for the training of the unemployed, including the long-term unemployed.

#### **ARTICLE 10 PARA. 5**

"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational training, the Parties undertake:

to encourage the full utilisation of the facilities provided by appropriate measures such as:

- a. reducing or abolishing any fees or charges;
- b. granting financial assistance in appropriate cases;
- c. including in the normal working hours time spent on supplementary training taken by the worker, at the request of his employer, during employment;
- d. ensuring, through adequate supervision, in consultation with the employers' and workers' organisations, the efficiency of apprenticeship and other training arrangements for young workers, and the adequate protection of young workers generally."

#### **Question A**

**Please give a brief account of any fees or charges imposed in respect of vocational training and indicate, where appropriate, the measures taken to reduce or abolish such fees or charges.**

Pupils who attend Public Secondary General or Technical Schools in Cyprus are not required to pay any registration or tuition fees.

The subsidization policy of the **HRDA** provides for subsidies to employers whose employees participate in training activities that meet identified training needs. These subsidies, depending on the form and method of training, may cover salaries of employees while on training, fees paid to training providers, training costs directly borne by the employer, etc. An important consideration for being entitled to training subsidies by the HRDA is that employers must pay the relevant levy to the Human Resource Development Fund.

So, in effect, employees do not pay any fees for training activities. When they attend training programmes during working hours, their salary is partly subsidized by the HRDA.

It is noted that all training activities and schemes of the HRDA have been revised in order to comply with the State Aid Regulation of the European Union (EC No 68/2001) and the relevant Cyprus legislation. Since then, the

Training Infrastructure Support Scheme is operated under the *de minimis* regulation.

As stated above, the criteria applying for Cypriots concerning vocational training, including financial aspects, also apply to nationals of the contracting parties to the Charter.

### **Question B**

**Please describe the system existing in your country for providing financial assistance (allowances, grants, loans, etc.) to participants in vocational training. Please indicate also the nature of the financial assistance provided (amounts, duration, eligibility criteria, etc.).**

**Please indicate whether equal treatment in respect of financial assistance is ensured for nationals of all the Contracting Parties to the Charter lawfully resident or working regularly in your territory.**

As there are no registration or tuition fees levied for attendance at Public Secondary General and Technical Schools in Cyprus, there is no system of exemption, study grants or loans.

The government finances in full the operation of Public Secondary Schools in Cyprus, either directly or by contribution to the budgets of the School Boards.

There is currently no system of tax relief for the parents of dependent children in secondary education in Cyprus. However, the government provides financial support to pupils' families by the provision of family allowance and free or subsidised transport for those children living in more remote areas.

See also information given under Question A.

### **Question C**

**Please indicate the measures taken to include time spent on training taken by workers, at the request of their employer, in the normal working hours.**

Training is provided both during and outside normal working hours. Common practice is that any training regarded by the employer as "obligatory" is provided during normal working hours.

See also information given under Question A.

### **Question D**

**Please indicate the supervision and evaluation measures taken in consultation with the social partners to ensure the efficiency of apprenticeship and other training arrangements for young workers.**

The evaluation of training activities is a continuous and essential part of the training system in Cyprus. This is effected through research studies and surveys conducted by the HRDA.

Tripartite cooperation in all matters pertaining to training is an integral part of the system of Cyprus. In the evaluation of training activities, including those addressed to young people, the HRDA pursues the active involvement of the social partners.

Supervision of the in-company training of apprentices is undertaken by Technical School inspectors. Because of the problems associated with the existing apprenticeship scheme a New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA) is being developed within the context of the 2007-2013 Programming Period. The NMA is designed to constitute a viable, alternative form of education, training and development for young persons as well as to meet the needs of the labour market.

The proposal will be submitted for approval to the Council of Ministers by September 2007 and following a transitional period of two years during which parts of the current apprenticeship scheme will coexist with parts of the new apprenticeship, it will become fully operational by 2010.

The NMA will embrace young people between 14 and 25, will include three levels (preparatory apprenticeship, core apprenticeship and post-secondary apprenticeship), will be supported by an internal research and development centre and will be linked to the Competence Certification System, and eventually to the National Framework of Professional Qualifications.

See also information given under Question A.

### **Question E**

**Please indicate if the provision of sub-paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of Article 10 para. 4 are applicable to the great majority of the persons concerned.**

Yes, the provisions of sub-paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of Article 10, paragraph 5 are applicable to the great majority of the persons concerned.

## APPENDIX I

### HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CYPRUS

#### *TABLE OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2005*

TRAINING ACTIVITIES	Programmes (*)	Trainees		
		Male (**)	Female (**)	Total
<i>INITIAL TRAINING</i>	<b>170</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>1.040</b>

<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>80</b>
• Standard training	7	6	8	14
• Management training of tertiary-education graduates	68	42	24	66
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>960</b>
• Apprenticeship System	44	271	-	271
• Practical training of secondary school hotel-section students	14	141	76	217
• Practical training of HHIC students	7	34	30	64
• Practical training of HTI students	4	59	13	72
• Accelerated Training Programmes	26	325	11	336
<b>CONTINUING TRAINING</b>	<b>4.973</b>	<b>31.024</b>	<b>22.302</b>	<b>53.326</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>3.966</b>	<b>22.067</b>	<b>16.744</b>	<b>38.811</b>
• Standard training programmes in Cyprus	3.315	21.563	16.597	38.160
• Training abroad	651	504	147	651
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>1.007</b>	<b>8.957</b>	<b>5.558</b>	<b>14.515</b>
• Standard training programmes	865	6.544	4.560	11.104
• High-priority training programmes	45	490	224	714
• Trade Union Programmes	96	1.904	768	2.672
• Training abroad	1	19	6	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.143</b>	<b>31.902</b>	<b>22.464</b>	<b>54.366</b>

\* Figures for 2005 refer to programmes for which subsidies were paid during the year.

\*\* Figures for male and female trainees are estimates

*TABLE OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2006*

TRAINING ACTIVITIES	Programmes (*)	Trainees		
		Male (**)	Female (**)	Total
<i>INITIAL TRAINING</i>	<b>194</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>1.188</b>

<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>159</b>
• Standard training	9	34	45	79
• Management training of tertiary-education graduates	85	50	30	80
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>1.029</b>
• Apprenticeship System	41	212	-	212
• Practical training of secondary school hotel-section students	14	135	73	208
• Practical training of HHIC students	10	81	72	153
• Practical training of HTI students	4	53	12	65
• MIM	1	2	1	3
• Accelerated Training Programmes	30	379	9	388
<b>CONTINUING TRAINING</b>	<b>4.979</b>	<b>33.504</b>	<b>23.668</b>	<b>57.172</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>3.680</b>	<b>21.248</b>	<b>16.185</b>	<b>37.433</b>
• Standard training programmes in Cyprus	3.223	20.894	16.082	36.976
• Training abroad	457	354	103	457
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>1.299</b>	<b>12.256</b>	<b>7.483</b>	<b>19.739</b>
• Standard training programmes	1.103	8.565	5.969	14.534
• High-priority training programmes	50	544	249	793
• Trade Union Programmes	143	3.111	1.255	4.366
• Direct involvement of HRDA	2	11	10	21
• Training abroad	1	25	0	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.173</b>	<b>34.450</b>	<b>23.910</b>	<b>58.360</b>

\* Figures for 2006 refer to programmes for which subsidies were paid during the year.

\*\* Figures for male and female trainees are estimates

# GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

## Article 15

### of the Revised European Social Charter

#### THE RIGHT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO INDEPENDENCE, SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

(Reference Period 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2006)

#### **ARTICLE 15 PARA 1 - Vocational training arrangements for persons with disabilities**

##### **Question A**

**Please indicate the criteria applied to grant disabled status and give an estimation of the total number of persons with disabilities as well as the number of persons with disabilities of working age**

- **Criteria applied to grant disability status**

No change in the situation as reported in the last Report of the Government of Cyprus on Article 15 of the Revised European Social Charter.

- **Total number of persons with disabilities**

According to the latest Labour Force Survey of 2002 the number of persons with "long term health problems or impairment" was 53.369 (12.2% of the total population). Out of the total of 53.369 persons with disabilities, 28.194 (53%) were male and 25.175 (47%) were female.

- **The number of persons with disabilities of working age**

According to the same Labour Force Survey of 2002 the number of persons with disabilities of working age was 25.513 (48% of the persons with disabilities). The majority of the persons with disabilities (27.856 persons 52%) had reported that they were not working. Out of the total of 25.513 working persons with disabilities, 16.323 persons (64%) were male.

#### **Reply to the Committee's question for the number of children with disabilities and the proportion of persons with disabilities.**

There are no statistical data for the years 2005 – 2006.  
(Please see above "Total number of persons with disabilities")

### **Question B**

**Please describe the measures taken to provide persons with disabilities with education, guidance and vocational training in the framework of general schemes wherever possible or, where this is not possible, through specialised bodies, public or private and provide information on the following points:**

- a) assessment of the skills of persons with disabilities and criteria used to assess the prospects of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities**
- b) organisation of education for persons with disabilities in ordinary schools and / or specialised schools (access, number of persons and establishments)**
- c) organisation of vocational guidance for persons with disabilities (access, number of persons with disabilities, receiving guidance through mainstream or specialised provision)**
- d) organisation of vocational training (access, number of persons with disabilities, receiving vocational training through mainstream or specialised provision)**
- e) adjustment of the methods of vocational rehabilitation in accordance with the needs of the labour market**
- f) financial assistance available to persons with disabilities undertaking vocational rehabilitation .**

During the period under review, there were no important changes concerning guidance, education and vocational training within the framework of general schemes or through specialized bodies, public or private.

The nature and amount of the grants paid under the three vocational training Schemes operated by the Service for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Persons with Disabilities of the Department of Labour (of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance) have not changed to any significant extent. We have, however, included new measures and schemes which are co-financed by the European Social Fund and the Republic of Cyprus on an equal basis. These Schemes are:

- The Scheme for the Vocational training of persons with disabilities in courses of their own choice,
- The scheme for the Vocational training of persons with severe disabilities to help their integration to the labour force and society in general (co-financed),
- The Self-employment scheme,
- The scheme through which incentives are offered to employers to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector, through subsidisation of part of their labour costs and a subsidy to make any adjustments necessary to the workplace and
- The Supported Employment Scheme

Further information on these Schemes is given under para. 2 (Question A) below.

- a) assessment of the skills of persons with disabilities and criteria used to assess the prospects of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities**

As stated in our previous Report on Article 15, there is no formal, general procedure for the assessment of the vocational skills of persons with disabilities, especially those who are physically disabled. For persons with intellectual and psychological disabilities however, there are multidisciplinary teams that operate within the institutions responsible for the vocational rehabilitation of such persons.

The following criteria are used to assess the prospects of rehabilitation of a person with disabilities:

- His/her physical abilities,
- His/her mental and psychological condition,
- His/her previous experience,
- His/her educational status, and
- His/her interests and employability prospects

**b) organisation of education for persons with disabilities in ordinary schools and / or specialised schools (access, number of persons and establishments)**

The curriculum at special schools contains a major element of self-help and independence skills, social and emotional skills development, recreational skills, communication skills and vocational training. The prevailing philosophy is that the child should receive an education suited to his/her developmental needs.

Children with special needs attending mainstream secondary schools receive transition services designed for their age equivalent peers consisting mainly of career or further educational opportunities advice. Those with specific sensory disabilities are given specialized assistance from the special schools. The special schools have vocational training programmes for pupils, attending full time these schools.

Those attending technical schools are by definition in a vocational training environment.

Special schools for the persons with learning disabilities or those with emotional and behavioural problems also have pre-vocational and vocational training programmes designed to assist the transition from school to work or from school to other vocational training authorities. Many special schools maintain close links with non-governmental agencies providing vocational training programmes to facilitate transition.

**Pupil statistics**

Number of students with special needs

Mainstream classes

Preschool	224
Primary	2724
Secondary	1017
Special schools	357
<b>Total</b>	<b>4322</b>

### **Special school provisions**

School Type	Learning disability	Emotional problems	Sensory problems
Number of schools	6	1	2
Number of children	171	59	121

### **c & d) organisation of vocational guidance for persons with disabilities (access, number of persons with disabilities, receiving guidance through mainstream or specialized provision) and organisation of vocational training (access, number of persons with disabilities, receiving vocational training through mainstream or specialised provision)**

Most institutions functioning in Cyprus provide education, guidance and vocational training for both children and adults. Please see answer to Question D below for more information regarding these Institutions. Regarding the Committee's questions on how many students with disabilities attend mainstreaming vocational schools, the number of adults with disabilities participating in mainstream vocational training facilities and the possibilities for them to transfer from special to mainstreaming vocational training facilities, the answer is that there are no statistics on this issue yet.

### **e) adjustment of the methods of vocational rehabilitation in accordance with the needs of the labour market**

In addition to the vocational rehabilitation provided institutionally, there is a flexible system to provide vocational rehabilitation, in accordance with the needs of the labour market, through the Scheme for the vocational training of persons with disabilities in courses of their own choice referred to above, which takes into account the employability prospects of each individual person.

### **f) financial assistance available to persons with disabilities undertaking vocational rehabilitation**

Financial assistance for the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities is provided through:

### **i) The Self-Employment Scheme**

Under this Scheme persons with disabilities are entitled to a grant up to £2000, and to an interest subsidy (£300 for 5 years) for setting up their own business. In addition, the individual grant is increased in cases of a partnership of two or more persons with disabilities, by £500 per person.

And

### **The Scheme for setting up small business units**

Under this scheme persons with disabilities are entitled to a grand up to £3000, and to an interest subsidy for setting up their own small business units.

#### **ii) Scheme for the Vocational Training of persons with disabilities in courses of their own choice that are not offered by the Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Persons with Disabilities**

Under this Scheme persons with disabilities are entitled to reimbursement of training costs (up to £1.000) incurred in courses of their own choice. The training courses should aim at improving employment prospects and may also take the form of apprenticeship.

#### **iii) The Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Persons with Disabilities**

The Centre provides both training and employment, for which persons –with disabilities get an allowance. In addition to the allowance given to all trainees, a special allowance is given to trainees that are capable of producing in a certain workshop.

#### **Reply to the Committee's interest for special education in the following issues:**

- **Whether the Ministry of Education has primary responsibility**

The Ministry of Education has primary responsibility for special education

- **How the curriculum is designed and whether the curriculum and the above mentioned individual study plans and rehabilitation programmes are validated – adopted by the Ministry of Education**

There is no typical curriculum design. Individual education is developed according to the needs of the student. The Ministry of Education validates and adopts the above mentioned individual study plans and rehabilitation programmes.

- **What kinds of qualifications does the curriculum lead to and whether they are recognised in order to enable progress into further education or to gain entry to vocational education or the open labour market**

Qualifications are granted according to the committee's evaluation which decides if a child is to be placed in a mainstream school or a special education. The majority of them (around 77%) are placed in the mainstream education which provides all the qualifications needed for further studies or entry in the open labour market.

- **What the success rate is in progressing into vocational training, or further education or into the open labour market**

As mentioned above the success rate is 77%.

- **Whether the quality of education is monitored by mainstream monitoring mechanisms**

Yes it is monitored by mainstream monitoring mechanisms.

### **Question C**

**Please specify whether the measures mentioned above are available to all persons with disabilities irrespective of age, the nature and origin of their disability**

The measures taken to provide persons with disabilities with education, guidance and vocational training through specialized bodies, public or private are available to all persons with disabilities irrespective of age, and of nature and origin of their disability. All persons lawfully residing in Cyprus benefit from the aforementioned vocational training measures under the same conditions. It should be noted that the national policy for the education of children with disabilities is to integrate these children in mainstream schools. Adults who wish to participate in any of the programmes offered by vocational Institutions are placed in positions according to their vocational capabilities depending on their disability, in order to facilitate their placement in productive employment.

As an answer to the Committee's question as to the participation of people with disabilities in higher education, let it be noted that, according to the Labour Force Survey of 2002, 3569 people with disabilities are university graduates / postgraduates and PhD holders.

### **Question D**

**Please specify:**

- the number and nature of the principal institutions giving general education, guidance and vocational training and the number of places available**
- the number of persons undergoing such training**
- the number of staff, their qualifications and the measures taken to ensure their expertise**
- the organisation of co-operation between general and specialised services**

During the period under review there have been no important changes in the number and nature of the Educational/Vocational institutions functioning in Cyprus.

The principal Institutions giving general education, guidance and vocational training are the following:

### **1. School for the Blind**

- a) The School for the Blind provides general education, guidance and vocational training to persons with visual impairment irrespective of their age.
- b) Number of persons undergoing training during 2005 – 2006 were as follows: 70 adults, 13 students in telephone operations at the School and 180 blind pupils -were in mainstream education
- c) The number of teaching staff for the period under review was 23 and it comprises of the Headmaster, 8 school teachers, 9 teachers specialised for blind students, and one teacher for each of the following specialisations: sports activities, music, English, kindergarten and computers and one psychologist. The teaching staff is assigned by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- d) The national policy for the education of the blind is to integrate them in ordinary schools. The School continues to offer services to the blind irrespective of their age and reinforces the support services to mainstreamed blind pupils.

### **2. School for the Deaf**

- (a) The School for the Deaf provides general education, guidance and vocational training to persons with audio impairment irrespective of their age. The number of places available at the school is 80.
- (b) The number of persons undergoing training during 01.01.2005 – 31.12.2006 was 14 students.
- (c) The teaching staff consists of teachers specialised in special education for deaf children and general education who are following an in service training by the School. Furthermore there are teachers for mathematics, Greek, handicraft, art, English, Science and computers. The teaching staff is assigned by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In total there are 21 teachers (7 working on a full time basis and 14 on a part-time basis). Furthermore there is an audiologist, a speech therapist and a students' consultant.
- (d) The national policy for the education of the deaf is to integrate them in ordinary schools. As a result of this policy, the number of the students of the School is, year after year, declining. Consequently, the school is reinforcing its services to the adult deaf, in respect to their vocational rehabilitation and social integration, and is also upgrading the support services to mainstreamed deaf pupils. The school personnel in cooperation with the School Board of Management have suggested to the Ministry of Education and Culture that the school is restructured to Center of Education and Rehabilitation of the Deaf offering services and programs, such as :  
Education, Support Services to Mainstreamed Students, Seminars and Further Education on Deafness, Sign Language Learning to the Deaf and the Hearing,

Audiology Services, and Vocational, Welfare and Social Integration Services to the Adult Deaf.

### **3. Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Persons with Disabilities**

- a) Number of persons undergoing training for 2005 - 2006: 36
- b) Number of teaching staff during 2005 - 2006: 4 instructors in the following specialisations: leather goods/ shoemaking, furniture, industry/ carpentry, brooms making, knitting and sewing embroidery.
- c) The main aspect of the vocational rehabilitation of the persons with disabilities is their vocational guidance and training.

The Centre provides facilities for the evaluation of the vocational capabilities of the persons with disabilities and then places them to technical professions, in order to facilitate their placement in productive employment. Furthermore, the Centre offers services that aim to help the persons with disabilities to promote their skills, to become independent and to face any psychosocial problems.

### **4. Special Schools for Trainable\* Children**

Number of places available: 9

Number of children undergoing training for 2005 - 2006: 357 as follows:

The Special Schools and the number of pupils are:

	<b>Special Schools</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
1.	Nicosia Special School	59
2.	Evangelismos, Nicosia	41
3.	Apostolos Loukas, Special School, Limassol	32
4.	Pediko Anarrotirio of the Cyprus Red Cross, Limassol	27
5.	Agios Spyridon, Larnaca	24
6.	Apostolos Varnavas, Liopetri	26
7.	Theoskepasti, Pafos	27
8.	School for the Deaf	13
9.	School for the Blind	108

\* By trainable children we refer to those children who are able to attend mainstream schools. There are, however, children who attend special centres and are given support and guidance by educators appointed for this reason by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

## **5. Mental Health Services and Athalassa Hospital**

By December 31st 2006, the Athalassa Hospital with a bed capacity of 160, had 122 inpatients undergoing treatment. Out of this number 27 patients were over the age of 60 years while 17 patients between the ages of 19-49 years had severe mental subnormality.

The multidisciplinary teams of the Athalassa Hospital continued to formulate and carry out therapeutic, rehabilitative and resettlement programmes for the patients residing in the hospital. These professionals were four part-time Psychiatrists, two part-time Psychologists, one full-time and on part-time Occupational Therapist, one Social Worker and one hundred and fifty one Psychiatric Nurses. The multidisciplinary teams are also responsible for the assessment of the patients.

In the Athalassa Hospital, an Employment Scheme provided jobs to 127 patients, 70 patients during 2005 and 57 patients during 2006, at jobs in various utility and maintenance departments and in the wards of the hospital. For these jobs the hospital provides training and employment. A motivational allowance of £0.50 per hour is given to each patient. Social, athletic, artistic and other activities were organized and carried out by two Assistant Occupational Therapists while two part-time teachers from the Ministry of Education and Culture held art classes and gymnastics once a week.

In the Athalassa Hospital two Social Cooperatives continued to provide opportunities and employment to persons with enduring mental health illness. These two cooperatives are run in partnership with a voluntary organization. Ten people were trained and employed in these cooperatives during 2006.

The policy of the Mental Health Services has been for the last years to shift the therapeutic and rehabilitative services from the Mental Hospital into the Community improving at the same time the quality and standards of living of the patients in the Mental Health Hospital.

For this reason the vast majority of Patients with mental health problems are examined as outpatients in the Psychiatric Outpatients Department and are referred for Psychosocial and Vocational Rehabilitation Programmes to facilities based in the community operating in partnership with voluntary organizations and in cooperation with Local Authorities. These facilities are, two Day Centers in Nicosia, one in Larnaca and one in Limassol. One Vocational Rehabilitation Unit in Nicosia and two Social Cooperatives in the Athalassa hospital.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Unit offers work assessment, work counselling services, opportunities for development of working skills and a supported employment scheme-work placement with the support of two Job Coaches.

Financial assistance is given to those undertaking vocational rehabilitation training at the Unit from the voluntary organization assisting in the operation of these programmes. Sixty five people attended the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit while twelve people benefited from the supported employment scheme and are holding jobs with the support of the job coaches. Nine people found work in the open labour market.

A social club based at the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit provided opportunities for people to socialize and have cultural and leisure activities. This group managed to establish in Cyprus the first Association for persons with Mental Health Problems.

In the Athalassa Hospital the provision of workshop training in carpentry, cabinet making, basket making, general handicraft work and industrial work has seized to exist not only due to the change of the needs of the labour market but also due to the change in the interests of the patients being treated in the hospital. Today there is availability for new schemes for vocational training of these people in jobs of their own choice. The training takes place in establishments in the community with specialized support if needed and according to the employability prospects of each individual person. These opportunities encourage the work and social integration and participation of the persons who have mental health disabilities in the life in the community.

## **6. The Christos Steliou Ioannou Foundation**

- (i) The number of persons with mental retardation that were receiving services at Christos Stelios Ioannou Foundation was 207.
- (ii) The Foundation's capacity is up to 215 persons.
- (iii) The number of educational staff 36 persons.
- (iv) During the above mentioned period 24 persons with mental retardation were successfully employed in the free market.  
(The total number of students working is 78)

## **ARTICLE 15 PARA. 2 - Placement arrangements for persons with disabilities**

### **Question A**

**Please describe the measures taken to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in an ordinary working environment and in particular the measures concerning the placing of persons with disabilities; incentives for employers to hire persons with disabilities and, where appropriate, measures obliging employers to adjust working conditions. Please provide information on employment obligation for persons with disabilities.**

**Please specify the measures to ensure the retention of persons with disabilities in employment (duty of occupational redeployment for persons who become disabled following an accident at work or an occupational disease, ban on dismissal of workers because of their disability, obligation of employers to adjust working conditions, provision of support for persons with disabilities to start their own business etc.).**

The main law promoting the employment of persons with disabilities is the Law providing for Persons with Disabilities No 127(I) of 2000. This law provides that persons with disabilities enjoy equal treatment with other employees by their employer as regards the procedure for application for employment, recruitment, promotion, dismissal, compensation, training and other terms and conditions of employment. Moreover it provides for the creation of employment opportunities through the introduction of schemes for the employment of persons with disabilities through the granting of incentives to employers as well as for the creation of posts in the public, semi public and wider public sector to be filled exclusively by persons with disabilities.

With a view to implementing the provisions of the Law for granting incentives to employers in the private sector the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance has, as already mentioned under Question B of para. 1, operated schemes/programmes providing for the payment of special grants to employers who employ persons with disabilities. These programmes are co-financed by the European Social Fund.

Under this Law and programmes:

- i) An employer in the private sector who engages an unemployed person with severe disability (severe motor disability, mental disability, visual disability and audio disability) will receive an allowance, as a reimbursement for the salary paid to the disabled person during the first year of his / her employment. This will be combined with an additional allowance to the employer for expenses made for ergonomic arrangements and other alterations to machinery at the work environment, in order to facilitate the employment of persons with severe disability. This is to facilitate the obligatory arrangements, to the working place, made by the employer. At this point it is mentioned that there is no case law on the issue.
- ii) An employer in the private sector will receive an allowance for his/her contributions to the Social Insurance Fund for each person with disabilities he / she employs, during the first year of his/her-employment.

#### Amending Law 57 (I)/2004

The Law Providing for Persons with Disabilities of 2000 has been amended by the Law of 2004 (57(I)/2004) in order to be harmonized with the provisions of Directive 2000/78/EC for non-discrimination in the employment and occupation of persons with disabilities. More specifically, the Law prohibits any direct or indirect discrimination or any harassment against persons with disabilities in relation to conditions of access to employment and all levels of vocational rehabilitation. The Law permits positive actions which aim at the prevention and counterbalancing of disadvantages related to disability. Furthermore, it provides for a fine (up to c£4000)

and/or imprisonment up to 6 months to a natural person and fine up to c£1000 to a legal person for acts of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Concerning the Committee's question on the remedies that are available in cases of discrimination and the authority to which a person with disabilities can appeal or file complaints, it may be noted that a person with disabilities can appeal to the Courts in cases of discrimination. Except from the fines concerning discrimination, there are no other remedies concerning this matter.

Other Laws promoting the employment of persons with disabilities are:

- **Law No. 17 of 1988 regarding the Engagement of Trained Blind Telephone Operators**

This Law mainly provides that, when filling vacant telephone operators' posts in the Public Service, the Public Education Service and Parastatal organisations, priority should be given to blind candidates who satisfy the schemes of service and are trained operators and, in cases where blind candidates are not available, priority should be given to "disabled" persons, as this term is defined in that Law.

- **The Public Service Law No. 1 of 1990**

This Law provides that, in filling vacant posts in the Public Service, priority should be given to "disabled" candidates, as this term is defined in the Law, who fulfil the schemes of service, provided that they are capable to perform the duties of the posts and their merit and qualifications are not inferior to those of other candidates.

- **The Public Assistance and Services Law No. 8 of 91**

1. According to the **Public Assistance and Services Law of 2006**, a person legally residing in Cyprus whose resources do not meet his/her basic and special needs, may be eligible for public assistance. Special needs include a disability allowance, care services (home care, day-care and residential care) or other support services for persons with disabilities.

At the end of 2006, 22% of public assistance recipients were persons with disabilities.

2. The Public Assistance and Services Law includes provisions which encourage the **social integration** of all public assistance recipients. Further provisions are made for persons with disabilities. For example,
  - a. A fixed amount of CYP 50 (€ 85) is discounted from the monthly income deriving from earnings from work of the applicant and his/her dependants. A higher amount is discounted in the case of persons with disabilities CYP 300 (€ 512) per month.
  - b. In case a person with disabilities is in employment, s/he may still be entitled to supplementary public assistance.

- c. An amount of up to CYP 1.000 (€1.708) may be granted for training or professional equipment for the claimant or a dependant.
  - d. Public assistance continues during the first 12 months of taking up employment (full benefit for the first four months, two thirds for the subsequent four months and one third for the remaining four months).
3. Through technical and financial support, the Social Welfare Services **encourage NGOs to develop support services** (e.g. home care) for families and persons with disabilities. Based on the Grants-in-Aid Scheme, 54 programmes for persons with disabilities were provided with a share of 28% of the total amount of state grants, in 2006 (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Number of non-governmental programmes for persons with disabilities and amount provided through the Grants-In-Aid Scheme for the years 2006, 2002 and 2000.**

	C£ 2006	C£ 2002	C£ 2000
<b>Number of programmes</b>	54	49	39
<b>Amount of grants</b>	1305122	1045256	845500
<b>% to the total amount of grants</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>

*Social Welfare Services (Ministry of labour and Social Insurance)*

4. In order to promote the **integration** of persons with disabilities in the community, small state residential units (5 residents each) for persons with severe mental and physical disabilities have increased from 5 to 6, during the reference period. Accommodation in those units is free of charge.
5. To further enhance **social integration and participation** of public assistance recipients, the following Schemes are available for persons with disabilities:
  - a. **Family Support for the Informal Care of Elderly and Disabled Members.** A grant of up to C£ 6.000 (€10.251) is subject to the beneficiary's needs for house repairs, extensions and/or house equipment up to the maximum. The subsidisation may be granted in installments, based on actual costs. House repairs and/or equipment are meant to help the elderly become more functional and remain at their home (or the informal carer's home) for as long as possible.
  - b. **Subsidisation of holidays for the elderly and persons with disabilities.** A maximum amount of C£ 150 (€ 256) is granted for holidays. A beneficiary may be subsidised every two years.
  - c. **Social Benefit Scheme for the Improvement of Housing Conditions Scheme.** The Scheme aims to improve the living

conditions of public assistance recipients or persons at risk of becoming recipients of public assistance. The scheme provides for house repairs and house extensions. The maximum amount granted is C£ 7.000 (€ 11.960). Entitlement is granted provided the applicant owns the house in which s/he resides or his long-term residence in a house owned by another person is guaranteed. Comparing 2006 to 2004, there was a 38% increase in the number of beneficiaries who benefited from this Scheme.

The employment and vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities is promoted through the following Schemes that are operated by the Service for the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities of the Department of Labour :

- **Scheme for the vocational training of persons with disabilities in courses of their own choice.**

Under this scheme persons with disabilities are entitled to reimbursement of training costs involved in courses of their own choice, in suitable establishments, other than rehabilitation centres.

- **Self-employment Scheme**

Under this scheme persons with disabilities are entitled to a grant and to an interest subsidy for the establishment of a small business. The individual grant is increased in cases of partnership of two or more persons with disabilities. To the persons willing to run their own business, training in their field, technical assistance from government services as well as technical aids if needed can be provided, through the above scheme.

- **The Scheme for setting up small business units**

Under this scheme persons with disabilities are entitled to a grant up to £3000, and to an interest subsidy for setting up their own small business units.

- **Supported Employment Scheme**

This scheme aims basically at providing support to persons with mental or multiple disabilities to facilitate their placement and employment in the open labour market. The support is provided in the form of a job-coach who, after having an overall assessment of the persons' disabilities and capacities and after obtaining the family's consent and cooperation, proceeds in finding a job that matches with the persons' capabilities and interests.

The job-coach trains the persons himself and withdraws gradually to the extent that the person with disability becomes productive and adapts to the working environment.

Programmes of supported employment are implemented by voluntary organisations and are financed up to £6,000 per year for each programme by the Government. The Government follows up and assesses the operation of the programme and also provides technical assistance to the voluntary organisations.

In addition:

- the **Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled**, offers vocational training to persons with physical disabilities and to persons with psychological problems.
- the **Occupational Therapy Department** of the Mental Health Services provides at its workshops training and rehabilitation facilities for mentally disabled persons in the fields of gardening, carpentry and cabinet making, pottery, sewing, embroidery, mat and basket making and general handicraft work.
- the **Sheltered Employment Scheme**, introduced by the Mental Health Services, under which patients are employed in executing industrial type of work, supplied by local firms, aims at providing jobs to patients who fail to get a job in open employment due to the severity of their disabilities.

Special assistance and support to disabled persons is offered by the Employment Services of the District Labour Offices, mainly in the field of occupational counselling and placement. As stated above these services will be modernised so that they can offer individualised counselling by suitably trained officers.

### **Question B**

**Please indicate the number of persons with disabilities who during the reference period found paid employment**

Under the co-financed schemes (by the European Social Fund and the Republic of Cyprus) mentioned above, 42 people with disabilities found paid employment in the private sector.

During the period 2005 - 2006, 24 graduates of the Christos Steliou Ioannou Foundation were employed and thirteen more were supported in jobs in open employment

In the Athalassa Hospital, an Employment Scheme provided jobs to 127 patients, 70 patients during 2005 and 57 patients during 2006, at jobs in various utility and maintenance departments and in the wards of the hospital. For these jobs the hospital provides training and employment.

In the Athalassa Hospital two Social Cooperatives continued to provide opportunities and employment to persons with enduring mental health illness. These two cooperatives are run in partnership with a voluntary organization. Ten people were trained and employed in these cooperatives during 2006.

During 2005 – 2006, 151 persons with vision impairment were employed and some of them are supported in jobs in open labour market, including those employed in the Public Service Sector.

The placement arrangements of the disabled remained the same as described in previous reports. However, it is noted that there is no quota system either in the public or in the private sector, though the implementation of such an action is currently being considered.

There is no record on how many people with disabilities are integrated in the ordinary labour market.

### **Question C**

**Please provide information on sheltered employment structures. Please indicate the opportunities which exist to transfer from sheltered employment to open employment.**

The Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled referred to under para 1, Question D, provides vocational guidance and 'training to persons with disabilities. For the formulation and implementation of its policy the Centre is assisted by a Management Board, chaired by the Director of the Department of Labour and consisting of representatives from the Government Service, the Organisations of the Disabled and the social partners (trade unions and employers organisations). Please note that the trade unions are active in sheltered facilities.

The Centre provides vocational training in accordance with the needs of the labour market, which takes into account the employability prospects of each individual person. In addition, the Centre provides services to the trainees, which aim to promote their skills, to become independent and to face any psychosocial problems.

The Centre provides training and employment in the following specialisations: leather goods/ shoemaking, furniture, industry / carpentry, brooms making, knitting and sewing embroidery. The average duration of each training course in most cases is about 12 months, while in some other cases the duration depends on the severeness of the disability. Three laboratories are operating at the Centre, each of which has a capacity of 12 trainees.

During 2005 – 2006, 8 persons with disability started their vocational training in the Centre, 12 dropped out, 1 was employed in the open labour market and 36 continued their training, as recorded on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2006.

The Centre provides both training and employment, for which the persons with disabilities get an allowance. Trainees under 18 years old get £1.00 per day, trainees over 18 years old get £1.50 per day and married trainees get £2.00 per day. In addition to the allowance given to all trainees, a special allowance is given to trainees that are capable of producing.

Athalassa Hospital provides the opportunity to persons with disabilities to transfer from sheltered employment to open employment, through an employment scheme which provided for 2004 work opportunities for 64 persons at jobs in various utility and maintenance departments and in the wards of the Hospital. A sheltered workshop with light industrial type of work continued to provide paid work to about 10 patients daily (an attendance of 30 different patients throughout 2004). The Hospital provides both training and employment, for which the persons with

disabilities get an allowance of £0.50 per hour which is given for motivational reasons.

**Reply to the Committee's question for the figure on persons with disabilities employed in the ordinary work environment.**

There are no statistical data for the reference period.  
(Please see reply to Paragraph 1 Question A "Total number of persons with disabilities of working age")

**Reply to the Committee's question for the act No. 17/1998 regarding the engagement of trained blind telephone operators and whether it is compatible with the principle of integration and equal opportunities.**

The law is still in force. It is considered a positive measure towards persons with disabilities and this is compatible with the principle of integration and equal opportunities according to the Directive 2000/78/EC. Also, in reference to the Committees' question, people with visual impairment can choose and have a priority in a job they prefer.

**ARTICLE 15 PARA. 3 - Integration and participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the community**

**Question A**

**Please indicate how national policy promotes the independence, the full integration and participation in the life of the community of persons with disabilities. Please describe in particular how this applies to children with disabilities.**

The independence, full integration and participation in the life of the community of persons with disabilities is promoted through a series of legislative measures as well as through the operation of various services, measures, 'programmes and institutions for the care and rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

**Legal framework**

Law No 127(I)/72000, referred to earlier in this Report, guarantees expressly the right of every person with disability to independent living , full integration in the Community and equal participation in the economic and social life and lists a number of other important specific rights to which persons with disabilities have a right (See Section 4, subsections (1) and (2) of the aforesaid Law).

**Amending Law 57 (I)/2004**

The Law Providing for Persons with Disabilities of 2000 has been amended by the Law of 2004 (57(I)/2004) in order to be harmonized with the provisions of Directive 2000/78/EC for non-discrimination in the employment and occupation of persons with disabilities. More specifically, the Law prohibits any direct or indirect

discrimination or any harassment against persons with disabilities in relation to conditions of access to employment and all levels of vocational rehabilitation. The Law permits positive actions which aim at the prevention and counterbalancing of disadvantages related to disability. Furthermore, it provides for a fine up to c£4000 and/or imprisonment up to 6 months to a natural person and fine up to c£7000 to a legal person for acts of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Children are specifically covered by the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law No 113(I) of 1999 reference to which was also made earlier in this Report. This Law regulates the detection of children with special educational needs; their assessment and the development of an individualized educational programme; their placement in the most appropriate educational setting with provision of both teachers and educational resources to meet their needs; and for the ongoing evaluation of the child's progress.

A child can be said to have a special educational need if he/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of a similar age or if a disability prevents or impedes him/her from using the standard educational facilities and resources available in mainstream schools.

The State recognizes that all children have a right to an education appropriate to their needs. Law No 113(I)/1999 provides a legal framework where those with special educational requirements can receive, in the least restrictive environment, an education which meets their individual needs and ensures through ongoing revaluation that the child's educational programme develops along with the child and that every effort for the least segregated educational setting is made.

The majority of children with special needs attend mainstream schools and follow the normal curriculum which may be adjusted to suit their particular needs. During the development of the child's Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) staff will make every effort to ensure that the child is fully involved in all school and class activities. Where a child requires individual assistance outside of his/her classroom this is arranged so as not to restrict their access to all subjects of the curriculum.

Children attending special units within mainstream schools have the same school day as the mainstream school and, depending upon their individual needs, may spend the majority of lessons along with their reference class. The amount of time spent within the special unit is analogous with the level of learning difficulty that the child presents. This will also determine the amount of differentiation that the child's personalized curriculum will have from that of his/her peer group.

All new special schools are obliged to be built within the bounds of a mainstream school and new and existing special schools must develop networks of contacts and joint activities with mainstream schools to minimize segregation. The schools for visual and hearing impaired children have a wide network of cooperation and support for children integrated into mainstream schools and most special schools have developed contacts and joint activities with local mainstream schools.

## **Measures taken for social integration and participation in the life of the community of people with disabilities.**

Please see information given in our previous report and the reply given to Para.1, Questions B and D, and Para.2, Question A for the legal framework and the measures taken for vocational rehabilitation of people with disabilities. " "

Other measures taken for the promotion for full integration and participation in the life of the community of people with disabilities include occupational counselling and placement, provision of allowances and other financial assistance (invalidity pension, injury benefit, mobility allowance, duty free car, technical aids, severe motor disability allowance), provision of medical and health services, provision of financial assistance for the purchase of their own house, positive measures, etc.

### **Question B**

**Please describe:**

- a. the measures taken to overcome barriers to communication and mobility**
- b. measures taken to enable access to transport, housing, cultural activities and leisure for persons with disabilities.**

Basic aim of the Government's policy is to upgrade the quality of life of persons with disabilities through a comprehensive policy which will promote the best possible social integration of these persons. Making society more open, elimination of prejudices and ignorance around the issues of disability and the removal of barriers to communication and mobility are part of this policy.

#### **a. the measures taken to overcome barriers to communication and mobility**

Provisions promoting the access of persons with disabilities to information and communication are included in the Persons with Disabilities Law No 127(I) of 2000 administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, whilst provisions promoting their mobility are included in the Streets and Buildings (Amendment) Law No 97(I)71992 and the Streets and Buildings (Amendment) Regulations of 1999 (P.I. 86/99) issued there under administered by the Ministry of Interior.

The Persons with Disabilities Law No 127(I) of 2000 provides for specific measures with regard to information and communication such as the broadcasting of special news bulletins for the deaf (Sign language), the installation of an appropriate telephone system for people with hearing or any other sensor or speech disability and public access to telecommunication facilities.

The Streets and Buildings (Amendment) Law No 97(I)71992 and the Streets and Buildings (Amendment) Regulations of 1999 (P.I. 86/99) issued there under provide for the accessibility of public places and buildings to persons with disabilities.

According to Law No 97(I)/1992 the competent authority may:

- before granting a building permit, require plans or modified plans in order to guarantee the access of persons with disabilities to the building.

- when granting a building permit, impose conditions for securing easy and safe access to them by persons with disabilities.

The Streets and Buildings (Amendment) Regulations of 1999 (P.I. 86/99) regulate the use of buildings by persons with disabilities. These Regulations cover certain buildings specified in the Regulations and set conditions that these buildings must fulfil in order to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

More specifically these Regulations apply to public buildings to which the entrance of the public is permitted: shopping malls, buildings which include shops or offices, buildings with 5 or more apartments with parking places for more than 5 vehicles, educational institutions including the places where students live, gym, exercising facilities and swimming pools, clinics, medical centres, industrial buildings with an average of more than ten people. According to the Regulations all levels of such buildings should be accessible to persons with disabilities. These regulations lay down the exact measurement of doors, ramps, elevators, pavements and WCs for persons with disabilities. Moreover, swimming pools, theatres, and cinemas should also have a certain percentage of seats suitable for persons with disabilities and easy access to the emergency exits.

In addition:

- The Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CYTA),
  - has installed public phones in special telephone booths designed to enable access of people on wheelchairs. In addition, all public phones are equipped with terminals that can be used by blind people and people with hearing disabilities,
  - facilitates the communication of people with hearing disabilities through the service 1408, 1409, 99510408
  - provides blind people with access to the directory inquiry services 118 92 free of charge.
- The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (Cy.B.C.) and four private TV stations provide translation in sign language daily of one bulletin broadcasted. A request to the Cy.B.C. for a separate bulletin for the Deaf has been submitted.

The Service for the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities operates a scheme providing technical aids and equipment to disabled persons, to improve their living conditions or to facilitate their vocational rehabilitation.

**b. Measures taken to enable access to transport, housing, cultural activities and leisure for persons with disabilities.**

**Housing**

6. According to the **Public Assistance and Services Law of 2006**, a person legally residing in Cyprus whose resources do not meet his/her basic and special needs, may be eligible for public assistance. Special needs include a disability

allowance, care services (home care, day-care and residential care) or other support services for persons with disabilities.

At the end of 2006, 22% of public assistance recipients were persons with disabilities.

7. Through technical and financial support, the Social Welfare Services **encourage NGOs to develop support services** (e.g. home care) for families and persons with disabilities. Based on the Grants-in-Aid Scheme, 54 programmes for persons with disabilities were provided with a share of 28% of the total amount of state grants, in 2006 (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Number of non-governmental programmes for persons with disabilities and amount provided through the Grants-In-Aid Scheme for the years 2006, 2002 and 2000.**

	C£ 2006	C£ 2002	C£ 2000
<b>Number of programmes</b>	54	49	39
<b>Amount of grants</b>	1305122	1045256	845500
<b>% to the total amount of grants</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>

*Social Welfare Services (Ministry of labour and Social Insurance)*

8. In order to promote the **integration** of persons with disabilities in the community, small state residential units (5 residents each) for persons with severe mental and physical disabilities have increased from 5 to 6, during the reference period. Accommodation in those units is free of charge.
9. To further enhance **social integration and participation** of public assistance recipients, the following Schemes are available for persons with disabilities:
  - a. **Family Support for the Informal Care of Elderly and Disabled Members.** A grant of up to C£ 6.000 (€10.251) is subject to the beneficiary's needs for house repairs, extensions and/or house equipment up to the maximum. The subsidisation may be granted in installments, based on actual costs. House repairs and/or equipment are meant to help the elderly become more functional and remain at their home (or the informal carer's home) for as long as possible.
  - b. **Social Benefit Scheme for the Improvement of Housing Conditions Scheme.** The Scheme aims to improve the living conditions of public assistance recipients or persons at risk of becoming recipients of public assistance. The scheme provides for house repairs and house extensions. The maximum amount granted is C£ 7.000 (€ 11.960). Entitlement is granted provided the applicant owns

the house in which s/he resides or his long-term residence in a house owned by another person is guaranteed. Comparing 2006 to 2004, there was a 38% increase in the number of beneficiaries who benefited from this Scheme.

## **Transport**

At the two airports of Cyprus, facilities are provided, so that disabled persons may be served with minimum inconvenience. These include car park near the buildings so as to minimise distance, ramps to facilitate surface movement, toilets specially designed, voice/ video provision of information and equipment. Passengers with reduced mobility are further assisted by the air carriers.

A section within the Terminal Services Department at Larnaca and Pafos Airport, offers specialized services for passengers with disabilities. The section, so called "Wheelchair assistants", comprises 13 employees all regularly trained by the Paraplegic Department of the Ministry of Health.

The framework Law for Persons with Disabilities, Law No 127(1)/2000, provides that public means of transport or a certain number of them should be adjusted accordingly or the safe use and transport of persons with disabilities including persons using a wheelchair.

**Reply to the Committee's question for the adjustment of public transport for persons with disabilities and whether public transport is free of charge for persons with disabilities and if reductions are granted to the persons accompanying them.**

This legal requirement is not fully implemented. The public transport is not free of charge and no reductions are granted for persons accompanying them.

## **Cultural activities and leisure**

As mentioned above, relevant regulations provide for the existence of adequate means of access to public buildings such as gym centres, sport facilities, swimming pools, theatres and cinemas.

In the field of sports the Cyprus Sport Organization, which is a semi-governmental organization, cooperates with various organizations of the disabled persons and provides counselling services and financial assistance for sport meetings abroad and in Cyprus, for sport equipment and for the employment of adequately trained trainers. Unfortunately, there is no free access or reduced fees for the use of cultural and leisure facilities.

## **Question C**

**Please indicate how organizations representing or assisting persons with disabilities are consulted or involved in the formulation and implementation of the social integration policies for persons with disabilities.**

In Cyprus social dialogue with all actors is well developed and practiced. Persons with disabilities are organised in a number of specialised Organisations.

The Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled (CCOD) constitutes the umbrella body to which specialised and other Organisations belong. The following Organizations are members of CCOD:

- Pancyprrian Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilitites (POAA)
- Pancyprrian Organisation of the Blind (POT)
- Pancyprrian Organisation of the Deaf
- Organization of the Paraplegic of Cyprus (OPAK)
- Association of People with Multiple Sclerosis
- Pancyprrian Association of Parents of Mentally Retarded Persons (PASYGOKA)
- Association of Students and Graduates of the Centre the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities are represented through their Organizations on all bodies, established by legislation or administrative arrangements, for the examination of issues concerning disability.

The most significant of these bodies is the Pancyprrian Council for Persons with Disabilities established by the Persons with Disabilities Law 127 (I)/2000 and chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, with representatives from four organizations of persons with disabilities. (POT, POAA, PASYGOKA, Pancyprrian Organization of the Deaf)

The terms of reference of this Council are:

- a) to advise on the formulation or review of the national policy and all issues concerning disabilities and persons with disabilities
- b) to advise or formulate recommendations for the introduction of relevant legislation or revision of existing one
- c) to coordinate and guide the non governmental activities on issues concerning persons with disabilities
- d) to monitor the actions and measures promoted by the Service for the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities with a view to implementing the programmes/measures for persons with disabilities.
- e) to suggest the introduction of measures and the implementation of programmes for persons with disabilities.

Other bodies established by legislation are:

- the Committee for the Protection of the Rights of People with Mental Handicap established by the Mentally Retarded Persons Law No 117 of 1989. Five out of ten of the members of this Committee are designated by the

- Pancyprian Association of Parents of Mentally Retarded Persons.
- the Consultative Committee of the Fund of the Lottery for Persons with Disabilities established by the Fund of the Lottery for Persons with Disabilities Law No 79 (I) of 1992. The President and the four members of this Committee are persons with disabilities and are designated by the Organisations of Persons with Disabilities.
  - the Administrative Committee of the Special Fund of the Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities established by the Special Fund of the Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Law No 103(I) of 2000. Two representatives (of five) are designated by the Organisations of Persons with Disabilities.

A new Law governing the procedure for consultation between state and other services concerning matters in relation to people with disabilities, Law 143(I)/2006 was introduced.

This new Law establishes Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled as the State's social partner in matters concerning people with disabilities and it states that any State Service, which is considering adopting or implementing measures or make any decisions concerning people with disabilities, should firstly consult with the Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled.

It also states that the State will be providing annual financial aid towards expenses incurred from the operations of the Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled.

**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

**Report on**

**Paragraph 4 of**

**Article 18**

**of the Revised European Social Charter**

**THE RIGHT TO ENGAGE IN A GAINFUL OCCUPATION IN THE**

**TERRITORY OF OTHER PARTIES**

**(Reference Period 01.01.2003 – 31.12.2006)**

**ARTICLE 18 PARA. 4**

*"With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to engage in a gainful occupation in the territory of any other Party, the Parties undertake: the right of their nationals to leave the country to engage in a gainful occupation in the territories of the other Parties."*

**Please indicate whether there are any restrictions or special conditions affecting the right of such persons to leave the country for this reason and, if so, what the regulations are.**

No change.

**Replies of the Government of Cyprus to the questions raised  
by the European Committee of Social Rights on article 18**

**According to the report, nationals of the Republic of Cyprus may be prevented from leaving the country on the following grounds as stipulated, *inter alia*, under the Children's Act and the National Guard Laws:**

- an arrest warrant or a court order are pending with respect to the person;
- the person is legally liable for the care and maintenance of a child or children under the age of sixteen years and wants to leave the country without the child or children in which case the Director of the Social Welfare Services is under an obligation to prevent the person from leaving the country unless this person can provide evidence that the child or children are not likely to become dependent of public funds or be exposed to moral danger or neglect;

- **the person has been called for military service unless a special license is granted by the Minister of Defence.**

**While the Committee finds that these are the kind of restrictions authorised by Article G of the Revised Charter, it nevertheless asks for the regulatory criteria or basis for a rejection to leave the country in these cases. Furthermore, the Committee would like to know whether nationals of the Republic of Cyprus may be prevented from leaving the country on any other grounds than those mentioned in the report.**

**The Committee also wishes the next report to explain how the rule that a person may be prohibited to leave the country on the grounds that he has to perform his military service is applied in practice.**

The above provision of the Children's Act (the case in which the **person is legally liable for the care and maintenance of a child or children under the age of sixteen years**) is considered obsolete and has therefore become inactive during the reference period. The bill amending the Children's Act - which is under preparation - does not include such a provision.

Given the political situation in Cyprus, as a result of the occupation of part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus since 1974 by Turkish troops, it became necessary to monitor the uncontrollable departures of **nationals who are enrolled to perform military service**. The Ministry of Defense has decided to issue special licenses to those obliged to serve in the National Guard and intend to leave the country.

The Ministry of Defense has not imposed any other restriction to those males who wish to travel abroad, other than that mentioned above. This rule has been applied in practice many times, i.e. male persons who are planning to leave the country even for a short period are obliged to obtain a special license granted by the Ministry of Defense, if they are under 21 years of age.

Nationals of the Republic of Cyprus may be prevented from leaving the country, inter alia, **when an arrest warrant or a court order are pending** with respect to the person.

Article 18 of the Criminal Procedure Law (Cap. 155) provides that (unofficial translation): 'When a judge is satisfied by a submission of a written application supported by oath, that there is a reasonable suspicion that a person committed an offence or when the arrest or detention are considered reasonably necessary in order to inhibit the commitment of an offence or the escape after the commitment of it, the judge may issue a warrant of arrest which will authorize the arrest of the person against of whom the warrant is issued'.

The arrest warrant pending with respect to a person, is registered in a record and that person is prohibited from leaving the country.

Both for civil and criminal cases it is in the discretionary powers of the judge to issue a court order with respect to a person. In these cases, the judge may issue an order

based on the facts of each particular case presented before him, provided that no court order shall be issued, unless the grounds on which it is applied for are reasonable and supported by oath.

The court order pending with respect to a person is registered in a record and that person is prohibited from leaving the country.

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**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

**Report on**

**Article 20**

**of the Revised European Social Charter**

**THE RIGHT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUAL TREATMENT IN  
MATTERS OF EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION WITHOUT  
DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF SEX**

**(Reference Period 01.01.2005 – 31.12.2006)**

*“With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex, the Parties undertake to recognise that right and to take appropriate measures to ensure or promote its application in the following fields:*

- a. access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration;*
- b. vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation;*
- c. terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration;*
- d. career development, including promotion”.*

**Question A**

**Please state how the rights contained in this provision have been protected in legislation. This information should be specified according to the areas listed in paragraph 1 of Article 20.**

a. access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration;

The Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Occupational Training (Amending) Law of 2006 (40(I)/2006) was enacted.

The amendment of the Law provides for the following, among others:

- It makes the definition of sexual harassment clearer and distinguishes it from non-sexual gender-based harassment.
- It allows NGOs to represent their members in court or submit a complaint on behalf of their members.
- It gives the social partners more say in measures taken on enterprise level.

A copy of the Law (in Greek) is attached as Appendix II.

b. vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation:

The provision of training in Cyprus has for a long time, at least since 1979 – the first year of operation of the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (formerly, the Industrial Training Authority), - been based on the expressed principle of equal access to all, including persons with disabilities. Both the legislation providing for the establishment and operation of the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA), which is the national agency for human resources training and development, as well as the policies and measures of the organization ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, disability or any other trainee characteristic. Within this framework, the training system in Cyprus provides for the close cooperation of the social partners.

Moreover, the absence of discrimination in relation to gender has been further strengthened by the Law on Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training, No. 205(I) of 2002, in force as from 1 January 2003, which expressly provides for equal treatment of men and women and prohibits any discrimination on gender grounds in, amongst others, vocational education and training.

See also part a of this question.

c. terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration:

A Law providing for Equal Pay between Men and Women for the Same Work or for Work to which Equal Value is Attributed (Law 177(I)/2002 and amending Law 193(I)/2004), was enacted in 2002, to harmonize the Cyprus legislation with Directive 75/117/EEC relating to “the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women”, and Directive 97/80/EC on “the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex”. This Law applies to all employees, for all activities related to employment and its purpose is to ensure that the principle of equal pay between men and women for equal work or work of equal value, is applied.

In September 2006, a complaint was submitted by the trade unions, representing the employees of an enterprise in the retail sector, relating to the contravention of the principle of equal pay by the employer. As provided for in the Law, the case was investigated by Inspectors appointed by the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, and eventually the dispute was settled in January 2007, after the two parties signed an agreement of compromise, including correction of the level of salary and compensation for pay raises lost.

See also part a of this question.

d. career development, including promotion”.

See part a of this question.

### **Question B**

**Please indicate whether legislation provides a right for a worker to take legal action before a court or other competent authority in order to ensure the effective implementation and exercise of his rights under this provision. The information shall cover the four areas specified in the provision.**

a. access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration;

It may be added that the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Occupational Training (Amending) Law of 2006 (40(I)/2006) (section 5) provides that workers' organizations and other organizations or associations or other legal entities which have as a purpose the protection of human rights or the promotion of gender equality, may engage, either on behalf or in support of the complainant, with his/her approval, in any judicial and/or administrative procedure.

b. vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation;

See part a of this question.

c. terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration;

See part a of this question.

d. career development, including promotion".

See part a of this question.

### **Question C**

**Please state whether clauses in collective agreements and employment contracts that contravene the principles of non-discrimination may be declared null and void and according to which procedure.**

No change.

### **Question D**

**Please describe which safeguards legislation provides against gender discrimination and against retaliatory measures undertaken by the employer. Please state how it provides for the rectification of the situation (reinstatement in cases of dismissal, financial compensation, etc.). Please indicate also whether there are other sanctions against an employer who is guilty of such discrimination.**

a. access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration;

It may be added that the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Occupational Training (Amending) Law of 2006 (40(I)/2006) (section 4) provides that a person's rejection of or submission to harassment or sexual harassment cannot be the reason of any decisions that put this person in a less favourable position.

b. vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation;

See part a of this question.

c. terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration;

See part a of this question.

d. career development, including promotion".

See part a of this question.

### **Question E**

**Please describe who has the burden of proof in cases of alleged gender discrimination in your country and whether this issue is regulated in legislation or case law. If the latter is the case, please enclose some decisions based on this case law.**

No change.

### **Question F**

**Please describe the specific measures to prevent discrimination against women in matters of employment and occupation, particularly in cases of pregnancy, confinement and during the post-natal period.**

a. access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration;

It may be added that the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Occupational Training (Amending) Law of 2006 (40(I)/2006) (section 3) amends section 4(4) of the basic Law providing that a woman on maternity leave shall be entitled, after the end of her period of maternity leave, to return to her job or to an equivalent post on terms and conditions which are not more unfavourable to her and to benefit from any improvement in working conditions to which she would have been entitled during her absence.

b. vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation;

See part a of this question.

c. terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration;

See part a of this question.

d. career development, including promotion”.

See part a of this question.

### **Question G**

**Please indicate whether there are occupations (if so, which ones) that are reserved exclusively for one or other sex, specifying whether this is due to the nature of the activity or the conditions in which it is carried out.**

a. access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration;

It may be added that the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Occupational Training (Amending) Law of 2006 (40(I)/2006) (section 3) amends section 4(2) of the basic Law which provided that certain occupational activities where by reason of the context in which they are carried out, gender constitutes a determining factor, are excluded from the Law.

Law 40(I)/2006 provides that these occupations are only excluded from the provisions of the Law concerning access to employment, vocational training and self employment.

b. vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation;

No change.

c. terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration;

See part a of this question.

d. career development, including promotion”.

See part a of this question.

### **Question H**

**Please indicate whether measures of positive action in favour of one gender aimed at removing *de facto* inequalities are allowed under the legislation and, if so, whether such measures were taken during the reference period.**

No change.

### **Question I**

**Please provide information on the situation in practice covering the four areas specified in the provision, ie. on:**

**a. the employment situation of both sexes (ie. the number of men and women who are in employment, unemployed, working part-time or on fixed-term contracts or other forms of temporary contracts);**

See information given in Appendix IV.

**b. access to and participation in vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation and the extent to which women train for jobs which have traditionally been occupied by men and vice versa;**

See information given in Appendix I.

**c. differences in terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration (with an indication of the differences between full-time workers on permanent contracts and part-time workers or workers on fixed-term contracts or other forms of temporary contracts);**

The gender pay gap in Cyprus, although considered to be relatively high (25% in 2005) compared to the EU average (15% in 2005), has decreased significantly since 1995 (29%) and it is expected to be further reduced, as more women professionals enter the labour market and their educational level constantly rises. Wage differentials in Cyprus are partly due to the overrepresentation of women in non-skilled occupations and low-wage sectors, as well as the glass ceiling in women's access to top management positions, especially in the private sector. Aiming at evaluating and analysing the extent of the gender pay gap in Cyprus, identifying and categorising its causes, presenting good practices in other member states and formulating suggestions for significantly reducing the gap, the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance has assigned the preparation of a comprehensive study on the gender pay gap. The study is expected to be completed by the end of July, 2007, while dissemination of findings, conclusions and suggestions arising from the study, to all related parties (public authorities, enterprises and social partners) will take place after the completion of the study.

**d. differences in career advancement between the sexes in the various sectors of the economy.**

See information given in Appendix IV.

### **Question J**

**Please indicate what active policies carried out by your authorities to achieve equal opportunities and equal treatment in employment and what practical measures have been taken to implement these policies.**

It may be added that, regarding the enhancement and modernization of the **Public Employment Services**, since April of 2006, 18 specially trained Employment

Counsellors provide individualised services to the unemployed. Furthermore, the upgrading of the Regional and Local Employment Offices has begun in 2006.

Regarding the promotion of **modern and flexible forms of employment** with the aim of attracting unemployed and economically inactive women to employment, a diagnostic study co-financed by the European Social Fund is being conducted. Subsequently, a scheme is being worked out for the subsidising of employers who create additional jobs under flexible arrangements. The purpose of the study is the identification of specific forms of flexible employment that are more likely to be successfully implemented in Cyprus, the sectors of economic activity and categories of enterprises where they could be introduced, the ways of addressing implementation problems and the institutional framework that should regulate these forms of employment.

The **HRDA** in pursuit of its non-discriminatory, positive action policies, promotes activities and measures that aim to narrow the gap in training participations between women and men, always within the framework of its mission i.e. to meet the economy's needs for well trained human resources. Activities and measures are established through research studies and surveys.

*Training activities approved of and subsidised by the HRDA, with numbers of participants, distributed by gender, for the years 2005 and 2006 are shown in the tables of HRDA's training activities in Appendix I.*

*As indicated by the figures, the proportion of women participants in training activities in the 2-year period under review has more or less remained the same as in the previous reporting period 2003 – 2004 at 41 – 42%.*

*During 2005 within the framework of the Scheme for the Reinforcement of Youth and Female Entrepreneurship promoted by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, two training programmes were implemented. These referred to the subsidization of the proposals for the creation of enterprises by young persons and females.*

Moreover, the HRDA during the period under review has organized five new Schemes, for the promotion of the training and employability of (a) the unemployed (b) young school leavers (c) the inactive females (d) the computer illiterate unemployed and (e) the improvement of the operation of micro-enterprises employing 1 – 4 employees through the provision of Consultancy services. These five Schemes are co-funded by the European Social Fund. It is expected that the Schemes will commence in 2007 and be implemented early 2008.

With the initiative of the **Ministry of Justice and Public Order**, the first National Action Plan on Gender Equality has been prepared, after a lengthy period of negotiations with all the agents involved, government departments, local authorities, academic institutions, NGOs etc. The Plan covers the period 2007-2013 and constitutes the framework of policies, actions and measures that need to be taken, by all actors involved.

The Action Plan has been approved by the Council of the National Machinery of Women's Rights and is now before the Council of Ministers for its final approval.

The aim of the Plan is to promote gender equality in all spheres of policies, through positive action measures and through the gender mainstreaming approach, in a systematic, comprehensive and holistic way.

The National Action Plan consists of the following six policy areas:

1. Equality Between Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training
2. Equality in Education, Science and Research
3. Equal Participation and Representation of Men and Women in Political, Social and Economic Life
4. Violence Against Women including Trafficking
5. Equal Access and Equal Implementation of Social Rights
6. Stereotypes and Change of Social Attitudes

Specifically, the chapter for the promotion of Equality in Employment and Vocational Training, includes actions for the improvement of childcare facilities and care facilities for the elderly, the conduct of a research on the pay gap, incentives and support for the enhancement of female entrepreneurship and for the economic empowerment of women, incentives for the adoption of family friendly policies by businesses and organizations, sensitization of employers and trade unions on the reconciliation of work and family life, etc.

Moreover, the National Machinery for Women's Rights through its budget subsidizes social partners, women's organizations and other NGOs in order to carry out programmes and activities promoting gender equality, in particular in the field of employment. Some of the activities sponsored included: awareness raising campaigns on the rights of women, seminars and workshops, the preparation and distribution of publications and informative leaflets on various relevant laws and issues, such as sexual harassment at the workplace.

In addition, the National Machinery for Women's Rights in 2003-2004, through E.U. funding, has successfully implemented a project entitled "Women in the Business World", which included a research, awareness raising seminars, as well as exchange of good practices, aiming at increasing the number of women entrepreneurs in Cyprus.

Several active measures are implemented by the **Social Welfare Services** with an aim to promote participation in the labour market, particularly for women.

1. In the period 2006-2008, grants will be provided to more than 10 care programmes developed by partnerships of NGOs with local authorities under a project (co-financed by the European Social Fund) called the "expansion and improvement of care services for children, the elderly, the disabled and other dependants". At present, 8 programmes have received grants through this project.
2. Under the above project, a study will also be conducted in 2007 on "the role of local authorities in the promotion of care policies for the reconciliation of work and family life".
3. In the context of the New Programming Period of the European Union regarding the Structural Funds, 2007 – 2013, the Social Welfare Services are planning the implementation of a new Project in order to promote the participation of women in the labour market. This Project is based on two pillars;
  - the subsidisation of care for pre-school age children whose mothers face difficulties in entering the labour market due to care responsibilities and
  - the subsidisation of use of new technologies for the provision of care services for older persons and persons with disabilities.
4. The Social Welfare Services operate the Grants in aid Scheme which encourages - through technical and financial assistance - the development of family support services by NGOs and Community Volunteerism Councils. The amount of grants increases every year (e.g. 25% increase in 2007 compared to 2002).

All programmes and projects implemented by the Social Welfare Services mentioned above apply equally to persons in need who live in the government controlled area of Cyprus. No discrimination is made based on nationality or gender.

See also part c of Question I.

### **Question K**

**Please indicate if social security matters as well as provisions concerning unemployment benefit, old age benefit and survivor's benefit are considered to be within the scope of this provision.**

No change.

## **Replies of the Government of Cyprus to the questions raised by the European Committee of Social Rights on article 20**

### *Conclusion*

*Law No. 177(II) of 2002 on Equal Pay between men and women for the same work or for work to which equal value is attributed, guarantees all employees the right to equal pay irrespective of sex. The report indicates that the scope of the comparison of jobs and wages do not extend outside the company directly concerned. The Committee recalls that this is a crucial means of ensuring that job appraisal systems are effective under certain circumstances, particularly in companies where the workforce is largely, or even exclusively, female (Conclusions XVII-2, Czech Republic, pp. 112-114, Conclusions XVI-2, Iceland, p. 465). Therefore, the Committee now concludes on this issue only under Article 20 and it finds the situation not in conformity with the Revised Charter.*

### *Response*

As provided for in the Law, the comparison between employees can be made with reference to employees who are employed or were employed by the same employer, or in a business controlling the employer during the last previous or following years. It is understood that the scope of comparison is too restrictive, therefore the Ministry aims at promoting amendment of the Law, so that the comparison of wages is extended outside the company concerned.

This particular amendment, as well as other amendments of the Law, will be discussed with the social partners during the procedure of transposing into national law Directive 2006/54/EC “on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)”, which brings together in a single text the main provisions existing in this field, as well as certain developments arising out of the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Communities.

### *Conclusion*

*On the basis of the Law No. 76(I) of 2002 on Part-time Workers (Prevention of Unfair Treatment), part-time workers have the same rights arising from social insurance as full-time workers with respect to health care, sick leave, maternity and parental leave, and annual leave. The Committee asks how equal treatment is guaranteed in respect of benefits related to employment.*

### *Response*

Equal Treatment in respect of benefits related to employment is guaranteed by Articles 6 and 7 of Law No. 76(I)/2002. (An unofficial translation of the Law is attached as Appendix III).

### *Specific protection measures*

### *Conclusion*

*The Committee recalls that other provisions of the Revised Charter deal with issues such as the protection of women during pregnancy, childbirth and post-natal period (Articles 8 para. 1 to 5), and the conciliation between private and professional life (Article 27).*

*The Committee asks whether the restrictions applying to women with respect to access to certain activities do so only as far as pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding conditions are concerned and reserves its position on the conformity of the situation with the Revised Charter.*

#### Response

The Maternity Protection (Safety and Health at Work) Regulations of 2002 (P.I. 255/2002) do not refer to restrictions per se. Regulation 3 of the above Regulations specify that, whenever there are female employees who are at the age of getting pregnant and, when the nature of the work to be executed is such that could present a risk for the safety and health of pregnant, recently given birth, or breast feeding employee due to any activities, working conditions, physical, biological, chemical or ergonomic agents, then the employer must consider the above during risk assessment. The Regulations also contain a non exhaustive list of such agents, methods of work, and work conditions.

On the basis of the risk assessment, if eliminating or minimising the risks at an acceptable level is practically impossible, the employer must remove the employee from such activity or transfer the employee to another activity free from any risks for her safety and health.

Therefore, the above Regulations neither explicitly forbid the employment of this category of employees to any work, nor impose any restrictions solely on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding, but only if it is derived from the assessment of the risks at the workplace.

#### Position of women in employment and training

#### Conclusion

*The Committee notes that the current report does not provide all the information about the respective positions of women and men in employment and unemployment, as did the previous report. It asks this information to be systematically provided. The report only indicates that, during the period of reference, the percentage of women participants in training activities was at 41-42 %.*

#### Response

See information given in Appendix IV.

#### Conclusion

*The Committee notes from another source<sup>1</sup> that in 2003 the female employment rate was 60.4 % (in 2001 it was 57.3 %) and that of men 82 %. In 2004, the unemployment rate was 3.8 % for men and 6.3 % for women. Women form the majority of part-time workers (13.4 %), and also of fixed-term contract workers (17.6 %). Women are more numerous in attaining upper secondary education qualification (87 %) than men (71.3 %). Participation in education and training was equal for both sexes (around 7 %). The gender pay gap amounted to 25 % in 2004 (Eurostat). The Committee asks what measures are planned to reduce the consistent gender pay gap.*

Response

See answer to part c of Question I.

*Measures to promote equal opportunities*

*Conclusion*

*In reply to the Committee, the report indicates that an action plan mainstreaming gender equality in all governmental policies is under preparation. Other measures have been launched during the reference period, such as the promotion of flexible forms of employment meant to help the reconciliation between working and family life; the reorganisation of the Public Employment Services in order, inter alia, to improve access to labour market of the inactive female force; the organisation of training for inactive women by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) and the development of child-care.*

*The Committee asks the next report to provide information on the results achieved by the implementation of these policy programmes, as well on the action plan in preparation.*

Response

See information given under Question J.

## APPENDIX I

## HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CYPRUS

TABLE OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2005

TRAINING ACTIVITIES	Programmes (*)	Trainees		
		Male (**)	Female (**)	Total
<b>INITIAL TRAINING</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>1.040</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>80</b>
• Standard training	7	6	8	14
• Management training of tertiary-education graduates	68	42	24	66
	<b>95</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>960</b>
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>				
• Apprenticeship System	44	271	-	271
• Practical training of secondary school hotel-section students	14	141	76	217
• Practical training of HHIC students	7	34	30	64
• Practical training of HTI students	4	59	13	72
• Accelerated Training Programmes	26	325	11	336
<b>CONTINUING TRAINING</b>	<b>4.973</b>	<b>31.024</b>	<b>22.302</b>	<b>53.326</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>3.966</b>	<b>22.067</b>	<b>16.744</b>	<b>38.811</b>
• Standard training programmes in Cyprus	3.315	21.563	16.597	38.160
• Training abroad	651	504	147	651
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>1.007</b>	<b>8.957</b>	<b>5.558</b>	<b>14.515</b>
• Standard training programmes	865	6.544	4.560	11.104
• High-priority training programmes	45	490	224	714
• Trade Union Programmes	96	1.904	768	2.672
• Training abroad	1	19	6	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.143</b>	<b>31.902</b>	<b>22.464</b>	<b>54.366</b>

\* Figures for 2005 refer to programmes for which subsidies were paid during the year.

\*\* Figures for male and female trainees are estimates

TABLE OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2006

TRAINING ACTIVITIES	Programmes (*)	Trainees		
		Male (**)	Female (**)	Total
<b>INITIAL TRAINING</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>1.188</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>159</b>
• Standard training	9	34	45	79
• Management training of tertiary-education graduates	85	50	30	80
	<b>100</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>1.029</b>
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>				
• Apprenticeship System	41	212	-	212
• Practical training of secondary school hotel-section students	14	135	73	208
• Practical training of HHIC students	10	81	72	153
• Practical training of HTI students	4	53	12	65
• MIM	1	2	1	3
• Accelerated Training Programmes	30	379	9	388
<b>CONTINUING TRAINING</b>	<b>4.979</b>	<b>33.504</b>	<b>23.668</b>	<b>57.172</b>
<b>Single-company programmes</b>	<b>3.680</b>	<b>21.248</b>	<b>16.185</b>	<b>37.433</b>
• Standard training programmes in Cyprus	3.223	20.894	16.082	36.976
• Training abroad	457	354	103	457
<b>Multi-company programmes</b>	<b>1.299</b>	<b>12.256</b>	<b>7.483</b>	<b>19.739</b>
• Standard training programmes	1.103	8.565	5.969	14.534
• High-priority training programmes	50	544	249	793
• Trade Union Programmes	143	3.111	1.255	4.366
• Direct involvement of HRDA	2	11	10	21
• Training abroad	1	25	0	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.173</b>	<b>34.450</b>	<b>23.910</b>	<b>58.360</b>

\* Figures for 2006 refer to programmes for which subsidies were paid during the year.

\*\* Figures for male and female trainees are estimates

**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**  
**Report on**  
**Article 24**  
**of the revised European Social Charter**

**THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION IN CASES OF**  
**TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

**(Reference period 1.1.2005 - 31.12.2006)**

**Question A**

No change in the situation as Reported in the last Report of the Government of Cyprus on Article 24

**Question B**

No change in the situation as Reported in the last Report of the Government of Cyprus on Article 24

**Question C**

No change in the situation as Reported in the last Report of the Government of Cyprus on Article 24

**Question D**

No change in the situation as Reported in the last Report of the Government of Cyprus on Article 24

**Response to the conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights**

**Scope**

1. According to the Termination of Employment Law (Law 24 of 1967-2003 and Regulations issued there under) employees who have not completed a continuous period of 26 weeks of employment with their employer are not entitled to any compensation in the event of dismissal since this period of 26 weeks is considered a probationary period. This we believe is in compliance with item 2 of the Appendix to Article 24 of the Revised Social Charter which states that a party may exclude from some or all of its protection workers undergoing a period of probation or a qualifying period of employment provided that this is determined in advance and is of a reasonable duration.

In any case, if a dismissed employee believes that he was unlawfully dismissed even before the completion of the 26 weeks period he may resort to the District Courts claiming compensation.

### **Obligation to provide a valid reason for termination of employment**

2. The retirement age is specified in collective agreements and in contracts of employment. There is no specific procedure for the termination of employment of an employee due to retirement. Upon retirement the employee receives all his benefits that are due to him as a result of a collective agreement, membership in an occupational pension scheme, custom or any other monetary benefit the employer decides to give as an appreciation of the years of service. The retirement age does not necessarily correspond to the pensionable age of the Social Insurance Scheme but often is the same. When an employee retires before the pensionable age he is also entitled to unemployment benefit from the Social Insurance Scheme provided he fulfills the entitlement conditions. Furthermore, upon agreement with the employer, employees who reach the retirement age may continue to work, even after the pensionable age.
3. The legislation does not oblige employers to provide in writing the reasons for the dismissal. In the case of redundancy the employer is obliged to inform the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance of the reasons for the redundancy. However according to Article 8 of the Termination of Employment Law an employee who's employment is terminated irrespective of the reason, is entitled to request a certificate from the employer stating the period of service and the nature of the employment. However, the abovementioned article also stipulates that this certificate may not include any negative references concerning the dismissed employee. These provisions of the legislation are aimed towards protecting the employee as the majority of dismissals for a reason other than redundancy may be against the employee.
4. Relevant decisions of the Industrial Disputes Courts regarding cases of dismissals are attached at the request of the Committee.

### **Remedies & Sanctions**

5. The minimum compensation the Industrial Disputes Court may order in the case of unlawful dismissal is equal to the redundancy payment which the employee would have been be entitled to if his employment had been terminated due to redundancy. The maximum compensation is the wages of two years.

It is noted that if the employee resorts to a District Court instead of the Industrial Disputes Court the District Court may order a larger compensation than the maximum compensation mentioned above.