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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Seventh periodic report submitted by Cyprus under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2021*, **

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.
** The annexes to the present report may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



I. Introduction

1. The 7th Periodic Report of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter, the ‘Present Report’) was prepared in accordance with the ‘Guidelines for the Treaty specific Document to be submitted by States- Parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [E/C.12/2008/2] (hereinafter, the ‘Guidelines’). The Present Report covers the promotion and development of economic, social and political rights in Cyprus from November 2014 to date, while taking into consideration the answers-comments already given by Cyprus¹ on the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [E.C/12/CYP/CO/6] (hereinafter, ‘Concluding Observations’) in the consideration of the 6th Periodic Report of Cyprus [E.C/12/CYP/6] (hereinafter the ‘Previous Report’) and the answers given to the List of Issues in relation to the Previous Report [E.C/12/CYP/Q/6/Add.1].

2. The Report was prepared by the Law Commissioner of Cyprus, who, pursuant to a Decision of the Council of Ministers (CoM) dated 25.2.1993, is entrusted with ensuring compliance by Cyprus with its reporting obligations under international human rights instruments. It was compiled on the basis of information and data provided by Ministries, Services and the newly established Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare² (DMSW).

3. Due to the continued illegal occupation of 36.2% of the territory of Cyprus, the Government cannot exercise effective control over all of its territory and thus cannot ensure the application of the Human Rights instruments to areas not under its effective control. This fact reflected in the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Question of Human Rights in Cyprus. Therefore, the Government is unable to ensure full realization of its policies and to apply its laws, policies and programmes concerning human rights, to those living in the occupied part of the country. In accordance with Protocol 10 of the 2003 Treaty of Accession, of Cyprus to the European Union (EU), the application of the *acquis* ‘is suspended in those areas in which the Government does not exercise effective control’. Consequently, all information and data presented in the present Report, concern those areas in which its Government exercises effective control.

4. The Cyprus economy, following the recession in 2014 had presented a positive growth path of five consecutive years, with an average annual real growth of 4.6% during the period 2015–2019. In 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis the economy went into recession contracting at a rate of -5.1%. As of 2021Q1, the economy rebounded with the growth rate for the year as a whole estimated at 5.5%. In the labour market, unemployment has declined from its peak of 16.1% of the labour force in 2014 to 7.1% in 2019 following good economic performance. In 2020 it increased only to 7.6% and this was due to the timely and targeted measures taken by the Government to mitigate the repercussions caused by the pandemic. For 2021, it is expected to average at 7.5% of the labour force. In terms of public finances, in 2014–2015 the fiscal balance was in deficit and then four consecutive years of strong fiscal position pursued. The budget balance of the General Government turned into a deficit in 2020 of about €1,193 mn (-5.7% of GDP), compared to a fiscal surplus of 1.5% of GDP the year before. This negative outcome, was attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the economy in 2020, as well as to the support measures of a one-off nature, targeting the consequences of the pandemic crisis on the healthcare system, business firms and employees and self-employed. This overall impact is estimated on the accounts of the General Government of about -3.6% of GDP. In the context of the still ongoing COVID-19

¹ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCESCR%2fCOB%2fCYP%2f26444&Lang=en.

² In July 2021, the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare was established aiming, among others, to develop and implement national policy and strategy to ensure conditions of social cohesion, social solidarity and a decent standard of living, as well as to provide social protection, to combat social exclusion, to promote the interests of individuals, families and communities and to promote equality opportunities for all citizens legally residing in the RoC. In addition, the DMSW will focus on the modernization of the existing framework of social welfare, in order to be effective and to the maximum extent possible in the horizontal handling of the growing needs of society.

pandemic, the general government budget balance in 2021 is expected to remain in deficit of about 5% of GDP.

5. Cyprus is determined to continue its coordinated efforts to ensure full compliance with all international human rights treaties to which it is a party and safeguard the human rights of all citizens in Cyprus. Cyprus contributes on a voluntary basis to various UN Funds and Agencies involved in the protection and promotion of human rights related activities, which bears witness to Cyprus' commitment to safeguarding fundamental human rights.

6. This Report follows the structure of the Guidelines providing answers to relevant/applicable Guideline articles. It focuses on the developments in legislation, administration, government policies and National Action Plans (NAPs), from November 2014 onwards. As requested, repetition of information (as provided in the Previous Report, in the answers to the Concluding Observations and in the Replies to the List of Issues) is avoided, unless where it is deemed necessary to cross-reference. Cyprus has recently signed the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

II. Part of the treaty-specific document submitted to the Committee relating to general provisions of the Covenant

Article 1 of the Covenant

Answer to question 7 of the guidelines

7. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 8 of the guidelines

8. Non-applicable.

Article 2 of the Covenant

Answer to question 9 of the guidelines

9. Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection may submit an application for the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI), which aims to ensure a socially acceptable minimum standard of living for persons (and families) legally residing in Cyprus, whose income and other economic resources are insufficient to meet their basic and special needs. Legal and continuous residence in the areas under the control of Cyprus for five years before submitting the application is not required for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. For non-EU nationals their status of residence has to be verified in accordance with national law (e.g. possession of a work permit).

Answer to question 10 of the guidelines

10. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 11 of the guidelines

11. Non-applicable.

Article 3 of the Covenant

Answer to question 12 of the guidelines

12. The percentage of the gender pay gap (GPG) in Cyprus has been gradually decreasing over the years. According to the latest available data of the Statistical Service for 2019, it stands at 10.1% compared to 14.1% which is the EU average. This positive development has resulted in Cyprus ranking in the 9th position among the EU member states.

13. The implementation of the project ‘Actions to Reduce the Remuneration Gap between Men and Women’ with a total budget of around €2 million, co-financed by the European Social Fund during the period 2010–2015, contributed, to the significant reduction of the GPG. During the implementation period of the project, the pay gap in Cyprus decreased from 16.8% to 13.2%.

14. The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI) engages in activities contributing to raising public awareness on the detrimental consequences of discrimination in pay, on women’s economic and social life like the annual Equal Pay Day during which various events take place, including conferences, forums, radio and/or television campaigns with the dissemination of messages and videos calling for the elimination of discrimination in pay. In 2020 a week-long radio campaign was co-organised with the Delegation of the European Commission in Cyprus, while an information campaign took place by the inspectorate during the same week.

15. The National Certification Body was established in 2014 and is responsible for granting certifications to enterprises and organisations that apply policies and practices promoting gender equality in the workplace. A call for certification is published annually, following a thorough evaluation procedure and organisations that meet the criteria of the certification model are granted a certification award. Since 2014, 57 companies have been awarded in total, 20 of which have already renewed their certification.

Answer to question 13 of the guidelines

16. Please also refer to the answer given in question 22 of the guidelines. The Equality Inspectors (EI) of Labour, intervene immediately after the complaint and may request the immediate transfer of the perpetrator from the same place of work. The Gender Equality Committee (GEC) advises organisations and the public through seminars in collaboration with the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration. The Department of Labour (DoL) is in close co-operation with the GEC. According to the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law (L.205 (I)/2002), the GEC submits the complaints to the Chief Inspector for Gender of the DoL for further investigation.

17. With amending Law 86(I)/2021:

- (a) A Code of Conduct (CoD) is drafted by all employers containing the punishable acts of sexual harassment and harassment;
- (b) The penalties for offences have been increased;
- (c) The GEC assist employers for the preparation of a CoD and/or investigate whether the CoD has been adopted and implemented by employers and whether employees have been duly informed;
- (d) The GEC provides training to employers and employees regarding sexual harassment and related matters.

18. The Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsperson) and the DoL of the MLWSI also accept and investigate complaints for direct or indirect gender-based discrimination.

19. The Equal Pay between Men and Women for the Same Work or for Work to which Equal Value is Attributed Law (L.177 (I)/2002) was amended to ensure more effective implementation.

20. The Department of Labour Relations (DLR), investigates complaints and also conducts ex-officio inspections (200–300 per year) both of preventive and repressive nature. The inspectorate’s role focuses on providing information to both employers and employees on the provisions of the legislation and practical compliance guidance to employers, aiming mainly at detecting direct discrimination in pay. During the period 2010–2020, 2015 inspections have been carried out in this respect.

21. Gender issues have gained greater prominence in the latest round of the Cyprus peace process through the examination of specific post-reunification constitutional provision, including the participation of women in political life. The United Nations Secretary General

himself has acknowledged ‘the concrete steps undertaken to foster the participation of women in the [Cyprus] negotiations’.

22. Further, a bi-communal Technical Committee on Gender Equality was established with the overall objective of contributing to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent relevant resolutions by facilitating the solution of day-to-day problems and provides advise in respect to gender issues.

23. Cyprus prepared a NAP on Women, Peace and Security (NAPoWPS) on the implementation of the above UN Security Council Resolution, covering the period 2021–2025, which will ensure the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

24. The implementation of this Resolution is an integral part of the Foreign Policy of Cyprus. The NAPoWPS 2021–2025 has four pillars: Participation and Empowerment, Protection, Prevention and the Promotion and Information on the Resolution. A series of activities have been adopted with the target to recognize the disproportionate and different impact of war on women and girls, to highlight the role of women in the prevention and resolution conflict and in building peace. It sets the framework for a coherent horizontal policy, which creates the appropriate synergies between the actors involved and aims to further strengthen cooperation to fill an existing gap and offer effective protection to girls and women.

25. Gender equality policy is formulated in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and its Concluding Comments, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2013 Sustainable Development Goals, as well as EU policy frameworks and has two main goals:

(a) The elimination of discrimination against women and the safeguarding of equality between men and women in all areas of law, and

(b) Strengthening the principle of equality and equal opportunities in practice, involving, inter alia, a change of attitude, promoting specific programmes that support and empower women in their multiple roles and mainstreaming the principle of equality into all programmes and policies.

26. The NAP on Equality between Women and Men (NAPEBWM) 2019–2023 was prepared and approved by the CoM in September 2019, as a project of close collaboration between the Government, the Commissioner for Gender Equality, local authorities, women’s organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), academic institutions and human rights bodies.

27. The NAPEBWM, includes the following thematic areas:

- Combating all forms of violence against women and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention);
- Promoting balanced participation between women and men in decision-making positions in public, political, social and economic life;
- Modernizing/improving the legislative framework;
- Protecting and empowering vulnerable groups of women;
- Promoting equality between men and women in employment;
- Eliminating gender stereotypes and social prejudices, and
- Educating and training women in information and communication technologies.

28. For the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), a Military Advisory Council for the Promotion of Gender Equality was established on 30.10.2019 and a NAP was approved by the CoM in December 2020 covering the years 2021 to 2025.

29. The Council’s role is:

- (a) Advocate for gender equality and promote policies to increase the presence of women at all levels of the Army;
- (b) Ensure that gender specificities are taken into account in the implementation of Army actions;
- (c) Encourage members of the Army to co-operate and contribute to its activities and report on gender equality issues;
- (d) Inform members of the Army of the impact of armed conflict on both sexes and the value of women's involvement in conflict resolution and decision-making.

30. The Council acts as GEC for the prevention of harassment and sexual harassment in the Army and the elimination of stereotypes.

31. Another gender equality development in the Army is the amending Regulations 28/2016 concerning Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's) and matters concerning both sexes NCOs are regulated by the same legislation. In 2016 the National Guard Law (L.19 (I)/2011) was amended with Law 82(I)/2016 and women can be recruited as contract soldiers. 22 of the 44 female Officers serve in positions of responsibility, administration and decision-making. Female NCOs occupy the proportion of 32.6% in the Army and female soldiers with contract the proportion of 20.7%.

Articles 4 and 5 of the Covenant

Answer to question 14 of the guidelines

32. Please refer to the answer given in question 40 below.

III. Part of the report relating to specific rights

Article 6 of the Covenant

Answer to question 15 of the guidelines

33. Measures and programmes were adopted to strengthen productive employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups:

- The strengthening of the capacity of the Public Employment Services (PES) with the recruitment of 30 Employment Counsellors since 2018, enhanced remarkably the PES performance and effectiveness through the provision of upgraded and qualified services to the unemployed and employers and particularly, intensive guidance and support to the vulnerable. The Employment Counsellors are placed in all offices of the PES network;
- In 2018, the DoL participated in two Support Programmes (Mutual Assistance Project) of the European Commission in cooperation with the European Public Employment Services (PES Network) in order to support Cyprus actions promoted for:
 - Improving the customer segmentation/functionalisation of services;
 - Expanding the use of IT for self-service provision;
 - Adopting an evidence based design and enhancing delivery of Active Labour Market Policies/improving activation services (including outreach) for jobseekers especially from the most disadvantaged groups, e.g. the young, the disabled and the LTU;
 - Improving the services for employers;
 - Developing a performance management, organisational culture and quality management, and

- Developing an approach of young NEETs who are not registered unemployed in the PES. Also, for implementing a mapping exercise identifying the characteristics and geographical distribution of young NEETs aged 15–29 was done in 2019;
 - An IT platform has been launched for use by both employers and job-seekers to better match labour market demand and supply;
 - The PES recently made a transition to online services, where Cypriot, European citizens, non-EU nationals and asylum seekers, can register for job search and counselling via an online platform.
34. Since 2014, 13 employment incentive schemes subsidizing employers to recruit unemployed persons, targeting long-term unemployed, young persons (15–29 of age), persons with disabilities and chronic diseases, disadvantaged persons (such as former detainees or GMI beneficiaries) and persons in the retail sector, were implemented. Around 11000 persons are expected to be employed under the schemes by October 2021 (see Attachment 1).
35. Measures for promoting equality in employment for persons with disabilities are:
- Scheme of providing financial assistance for the purposes of creating small units/enterprises by providing them a grant for self-employment. Scheme of subsidizing organisations to operate supported employment programmes. 24 programmes of supported employment were approved during the period 2018–2020 and more than 320 persons with intellectual disability and 50 persons with mental disability took advantage of the programmes;
 - The Vocational Training Scheme funding persons with an amount of up to €1.708,60 in order to participate in training courses of their own choice, increasing their employment prospects;
 - Adoption of the Law for the Recruitment of persons with Disabilities in the Wider Public Sector (L.146 (I)/2009) which regulates the recruitment of persons with disabilities who meet specified objective criteria, in 10% of current vacancies in the public sector.
36. Equal treatment of persons with disabilities is ensured by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Related Issues (Ratification) Law of 2011, by the Persons with Disabilities Law of 2000–2017, the Equal Treatment in Employment and Work Law and relevant Ombudsperson Laws.
37. The training, activities of the Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) respond to the training needs of the economy, of enterprises and of the labour force. These needs are identified by research studies of the HRDA as well as by enterprises concerning their own specific needs. Training is provided, by certified private or public vocational training centres and by enterprises.
38. Subsidized training is implemented according to quality specifications that respond to the needs of the economy, which are set in the form of guidelines by the HRDA in cooperation with the competent government services and the social partners.
39. The HRDA, implements a wide range of activities for the training and development of the human resources, providing employees and the unemployed with the opportunity of acquiring new or upgrading existing knowledge and skills. Emphasis is placed on acquiring specialised knowledge and skills related to the profession, as well as important horizontal skills. A priority is the acquisition of new knowledge and skills to enhance the employability of the unemployed.
40. Training activities for the years 2014–2020 are shown in Attachment 2. In order to meet the wide range of training and development needs of the country's human resources, the HRDA operates specific schemes, each with its own aims and target groups, as shown in Attachment 3.

Answer to question 16 of the guidelines

41. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 17 of the guidelines

42. Please refer to para. 27 of Previous Report.

Answer to question 18 of the guidelines

43. Please refer above and also Attachments 3 and 4 for detailed information on impact assessment.

Article 7 of the Covenant

Answer to question 19 of the guidelines

44. On 1.1.2020 an Order regarding the Minimum Wages in the Hotel Industry entered into force for the first time for employees in the Hotel Industry, even not members of Trade Unions, as shown in Attachment 5.

Answer to question 20 of the guidelines

45. The Employees in the Construction Industry (Basic Terms of Service) Law (L.52 (I)/2020) entered into force on the 28.5.2020. The Law was drafted after negotiations between employers' and workers' organisations setting provisions deriving from the Collective Agreement of the Construction Industry Sector e.g. working hours, overtime, public holidays, provident fund and bonus. It ensures that the terms of employment, as defined in the Sectoral Collective Agreement (SCA), apply to all employees even those who are not members of a Trade Union, thus preventing unfair competition among employers.

46. The Law stipulates:

- The working hours of an employee in the Construction Industry may not exceed 38 per week. Any work over 38 hours is counted as overtime. Employees are entitled to rest during the public holidays;
- Each employer is obliged to pay a bonus to each of their employees and the amount of which is agreed in the respective SCA in force. It amounts to the 13th salary of the employees. The bonus percentage is 8% on the daily salary of each employee. For new employees, the bonus percentage is 6% for the first year, increasing to 8% in the third year;
- The Provident Fund for workers operates in accordance with special regulations, as agreed between the two Parties. The contributions of employers and employees are set out in the SCA and paid into a corresponding Provident Fund at the end of each month, starting from the month following the date of entry into force of the Law.

47. The working conditions of all the employees in the Hotel Industry have improved, as a result of the amendment of the relevant legislation- Hotel Employees (Conditions of Service) Regulations of 1972 to 2020: P.I. 136/72.

- Every employer contributes 5% to the Provident Fund for each employee. The employees contribute to the Provident Fund 5% or 10% of their basic salary;
- Every employee is entitled to two days off fully paid per week;
- Every hotel employee is entitled to 15 fully paid public holidays;
- Every employer contributes 1% to the Welfare Fund for each employee, after completing six months of service in the Hotel Industry.

Answer to question 21 of the guidelines

48. Cyprus during 2013–2015 implemented specialised training programmes addressed to i) primary and secondary teachers, ii) school counsellors providing career guidance in

schools, and iii) children's parents to eliminate any stereotypes on the role of the two genders from the educational process, which result in stereotyping as regards the choice of educational field and the choice of occupation, eventually leading to women choosing specific sectors and occupations usually lower-paid than the ones preferred by men.

Answer to question 22 of the guidelines

49. Please also see answer to question 13 above. The Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law (L.205 (I)/2002) criminalizes sexual harassment and the penalties have been increased. The Law provides that the CoD aims to prevent acts of gender or sexual harassment by the employers and/or their representatives, of legal persons or organisations. The CoD must contain specific minimum requirements.

50. EIs are placed in all government offices and advice or examine complaints regarding the protection of maternity or gender discrimination and forward them for investigation. They are responsible for disseminating information and raising awareness on equality issues in employment to all employees and safeguard that the demanded labour (vacancies) by the employers does not include statements or imply anything which may infringe provisions of the Law.

51. The GEC consists of nine members (from ministries, employers' organisations and labor organisations) and has an advisory role to the Minister, receives complaints and gives approval for legal aid.

52. During 2018–2019, around 19 complaints concerning sexual harassment were received by the EIs. Two were withdrawn and the remaining lacked supporting evidence. During 2020 EIs investigated four complaints of sexual harassment at work. The complaints lacked supporting evidence and a *prima facie* case could not be proved.

Answer to question 23 of the guidelines

53. The Safety and Health at Work Laws was amended in 2015 to include the issuing of relevant secondary legislation in the form of Orders by the Minister and provisions for the prevention of serious accidents and the limiting of their consequences. In 2020, legislative amendments clarified the scope of application of the Safety and Health at Work Laws and introduced administrative fines for a wide range of contraventions by employers regarding the relevant legal provisions.

54. In preparing the new Strategy on Safety and Health at Work for the period 2013–2020, the views of the social partners, the results of the evaluation of the previous Strategy for Safety and Health at Work 2007–2012, the recommendations of the Committee of Senior Labour Inspectors and of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work of the EU on a new European strategy, the strategies of other Member States of the EU, the experiences gained from the implementation of existing legislation concerning health and safety at work and the particular needs of the society, were taken into account.

55. The fundamental pillars of the new strategy 2013–2020 are:

- Optimization of operation of the existing institutional framework;
- Existence of a suitable, adequate and workable legislative framework fully harmonized with the *acquis*;
- Existence of an appropriate and adequate labour inspection system;
- Improvement of operation of the supporting institutions;
- Introduction and implementation of a suitable health surveillance system of the employees;
- Promotion of prevention and safety culture through awareness raising, information and training;
- Mainstreaming of safety and health at work issues into other policy areas, such as education, employment, agriculture etc;
- Encouragement of the scientific progress and research;

- Close cooperation with the social partners and other stakeholders;
- Active participation at the Bodies and activities of the EU.

56. The state of implementation of the new strategy was assessed at regular intervals through a NAP which referred to the obligations of all stakeholders.

57. In accordance with the Department of Labour Inspection's (DLI) annual work programme, during the year 2020, the Labour Inspectors carried out 6037 inspections in 4027 different undertakings for safety and health matters at workplaces whereas during 2019, 3696 inspections were carried out in 2731 different undertakings. During 2020, 232 letters were sent to employers, self-employed persons or other duty holders to take measures against contraventions of the legislation found during inspections, in contrast to 430 which were sent during 2019. In 2020, 55 Improvement Notices and 270 Prohibition Notices were issued while in 2019, 106 Improvement Notices and 130 Prohibition Notices were issued by Inspectors.

58. The DLI actively participated in the national efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces, in 2020. From 4.5.2020 until 31.12.2020, the Labour Inspectors conducted inspections controlling the implementation of measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. The DLI coordinated the inspections carried out, for the same purpose, in premises of retail trade, by personnel of other services/departments of the public and broader public sector. A total of 3788 inspections and a total of 24741 inspections in the retail trade, were carried out.

59. The DLI's contribution to the efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is described in Attachment 6.

Article 8 of the Covenant

Answer to question 24 of the guidelines

60. Please see answer in paras. 45–46 of Previous Report.

Answer to question 25 of the guidelines

61. Please see answer in paras. 47–49 of Previous Report

Answer to question 26 of the guidelines

62. Please see answer in paras. 50–52 of Previous Report.

Article 9 of the Covenant

Answer to question 27 of the guidelines

63. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 28 of the guidelines

64. An amendment of the Social Insurance Law 59(I)/2010 with L.115 (I)/2017, gave the right to an insured spouse whose wife has given birth or acquired a child through surrogacy, or in case of adoption of a child up to the age of 12, to paternity allowance of two consecutive weeks within the period beginning the week of the child's birth/adoption and ending after 16 weeks. The insurance conditions and level of benefit are the same as for maternity benefit.

65. Please also see Previous Report on branches of social security covered. Changes to the amounts of certain benefits are indicated in Attachment 7.

Answer to question 29 of the guidelines

66. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 30 of the guidelines

67. Please see answer in paras. 210–214 of Previous Report. Regarding Guidelines 29 and 30, there was no change. The amount of social pension was €341, 95.

Answer to question 31 of the guidelines

68. No discrimination exists between men and women as regards age of access, qualifying periods and amounts of pension rights.

Answer to question 32 of the guidelines

69. Please see answer in paras. 25–26 of Previous Report.

Answer to question 33 of the guidelines

70. Regarding social pension, there is no distinction between nationals and non-nationals. Legally residing persons who meet the qualifying conditions are entitled to social pension. The Cyprus Social Insurance Scheme covers compulsorily all persons exercising gainful activity (employed or self-employed). There is no distinction between full-time, part-time workers or employees with permanent or temporary contracts, seasonal workers or workers in new forms of employment, such as platform work. All are insured and have the same rights and obligations under the scheme. However, self-employed persons are not entitled to benefits for employment injuries and occupational diseases and unemployment benefit.

Article 10 of the Covenant**Answer to question 34 of the guidelines**

71. Article 22 of the Cyprus Constitution states that ‘Any person reaching nubile age is free to marry and to found a family according to the law relating to marriage, applicable to such person under the provisions of the Constitution’.

72. According to Article 14 of the Marriage Law (L.104 (I)/2003), ‘for a marriage to be entered into, both parties must consent freely’. There is no free consent of the parties who are to enter into a marriage if a person is incapable of entering into a marriage (the person has not completed the eighteenth years of age, the person is incapable of understanding and appreciating the act of entering into marriage, by reason of cognitive impairment or deficiency, or due to cerebral or other medical disorder or disease, or due to addiction to addictive substances) or one party has been forced to enter into the marriage under threat.

Answer to question 35 of the guidelines

73. The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (DSIPD) runs the ‘Scheme for Subsidization of Social Assistance for Adults with Severe Disabilities’ through which NGOs are subsidized by an amount of up to €10.000 annually to employ social assistants to support their members in visiting hospitals, banks, shops, leisure events, sport events etc. Additionally, the ‘Scheme for Financial Assistance for the Purchase of Technical Means, Instruments and other Aids for Persons with Disabilities’ (e.g., personal computers, special or customised software programmes, mobile telephones, communication assistive equipment, mobility equipment etc.), aims to support persons with disabilities in their daily life.

74. Other social benefits schemes and services regardless of income criteria, aiming to offset the cost of disability experienced by persons with disabilities and facilitate their participation in the local community, are:

- Five laws/schemes for monthly cash allowances irrespective of income, namely:
 - (i) For Quadriplegic Persons €900 or €1.100 monthly;
 - (ii) For Paraplegic Persons €400 or €500 monthly;
 - (iii) Motor disability allowance €346, 27 monthly;

- (iv) For the blind persons €324, 43 monthly;
- (v) Mobility allowance of €75–€150 monthly;
- Three schemes for one-off financial assistance for the purchase of a wheelchair, for the provision of technical means, instruments and other aids, for car for disabled persons;
- Three schemes without any financial charge to the citizen namely the granting of the EU Parking Card (Blue Badge), the scheme for lending wheelchairs, the scheme for lending technical means and aids.

75. As from 2020, a project co-financed by European Social Fund for the creation of New Supported Living Homes in the Community, offering supporting services like care, support in communication, training in daily living skills, recreation and socialization, is implemented. Eleven new homes have been assigned to NGOs or private companies and offer supporting services to 45 persons with intellectual disability or autism.

76. The Social Welfare Services (SWS) of the DMSW implement the following Grants in Aid Schemes:

- (a) Scheme, under the EU Regulation 360/2012 on the provision of Services of General Economic Interest (De Minimis), and
- (b) Scheme under the EU Decision 2012/21, for the provision of Services of General Economic Interest.

77. State aid is provided to NGOs and local authorities for the establishment, operation or expansion of programmes that provide services to citizens in the field of social care, covering their specific needs: i.e. Homes for the elderly, Nurseries, Day care centers for school age children, Home Care Services for the elderly, programmes for persons with disabilities, psychosocial support programmes and other specialised programmes for trafficking victims, victims of domestic violence, unaccompanied minors etc.

78. State aid, is provided after an evaluation of data provided by each applicant, including the budgets of each programme, the audited accounts, any economic reserves or surpluses of the year, high loans, sponsorships from other institutions, pending operations of the programmes in relation to the legislations that regulate their operation, the number of employees and the number of people served, the geographical area of the programme etc.

79. Since 2014, there was a considerable increase in the total amount of state aid provided to NGOs and local authorities for the operation and number of social care programmes. The total amount spent in 2014 was €6.425.000 for 261 programmes, while in 2020 the amount increased to €10.641.231 for the operation of 272 programmes. Concerning childcare services, in 2020, 138 programmes (day care centers for pre-school age children and for school age children, for children with disabilities) received state aid with a total amount of €2.86 mln. Concerning social care services to elderly people and people with disabilities, in 2020, 77 programmes (day care centers for the elderly, home care services for the elderly, homes for persons with disabilities and day care centers for adults with disabilities) received state aid, with a total amount of €4.27 mln.

80. Concerning elderly persons and persons with disabilities residing in homes providing 24-hour care, during the periods of the lockdowns for the COVID-19 pandemic, the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy in collaboration with the Cyprus Telecommunication Authority, donated 115 tablets which were distributed through the SWS to state and community homes in order to enhance the regular contact of the residents with their relatives and friends. In addition, the Cyprus Telecommunication Authority provided wi-fi networks or upgraded the existing ones in state homes.

81. The GMI and Social Benefits in General (Emergencies and Need for Care) Decrees as they are amended or superseded provide for the subsidization of social care. All persons legally residing in Cyprus who are recipients of the GMI and persons not eligible for the GMI but with insufficient income to cover their social care needs may receive additional subsidization for the coverage of these needs by the Welfare Benefits Administration Service. In the context of the relevant GMI legislative framework, both in-kind and/or cash benefits

are provided for long-term social care according to the individual's care needs. The law does not impose compulsory periods of employment, insurance contribution or economic activity.

82. The SWS or the DSIPD are responsible for assessing the care needs of GMI applicants/recipients using specialised assessment tools.

83. The legislation covers the types of care described in Attachment 8.

Answer to question 36 of the guidelines

84. Two amendments were enacted regarding the protection of the Maternity Law (L.100 (I)/1997). Law 116 (I)/2017 provides for a surrogate mother and her entitlement to maternity leave of 14 weeks and the Laws 20(I)/2018 and 11(I)/2019 that extended the prohibition of dismissal of the employee mother to five months, and provide for the protection of breastfeeding within her workplace. The Paternity Law 117(I)/2017 gives the right to two consecutive weeks paternity leave within the period commencing from the week of birth and ends 16 weeks after.

Answer to question 37(a) of the guidelines

85. Please also see para. 77 of Previous Report. The Protection of Young Persons at Work Law (L.48(I)/2001), the Protection of Young Persons at Work (Amendment) Law (L.15(I)/2012) and the Protection of Young Persons at Work Regulations (No.78/2012) issued under the Protection of Young Persons at Work (Amendment) Law (L.15(I)/2012) prohibit the employment of children under 15 years old providing criminal sanctions in case of infringement of the said Laws and Regulations (fine is imposed up to €17.000 or imprisonment up to two years or both criminal sanctions).

Answer to question 37(b) of the guidelines

86. No such survey has been undertaken. The DoL monitors the implementation of the provisions of the Protection of Young Persons at Work Law (L.48 (I)/2001), the Protection of Young Persons at Work (Amendment) Law (L.15 (I)/2012) and the Protection of Young Persons at Work Regulations (No. 78/2012) and combat child labour through the mechanism of Inspectors appointed by the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. The DLI monitors the implementation of the provisions regarding the Safety and Health at Work (Protection of Young People) (Amending) Regulations of 2015 (No.43/2015). No violations have been referred. During inspection if a young person is present in a workplace, it is considered that the young person is employed by the involved employer unless the employer rebuts the presumption, meaning that the employer bears the burden of proof that the young person is not employed by him/her.

Answer to question 37(c) of the guidelines

87. The Safety and Health at Work (Protection of Young People) Regulations (No.77/2012) state that the employer must take into account the types of work which constitute special risks to young persons and take appropriate protective and preventive measures. The regulations contain lists of agents, processes and types of work for which the employment of young persons is explicitly prohibited, in accordance with EU Directive 94/33/EC. In every workplace where young persons are employed, the employer must carry out a written risk assessment before the commencement of work, specifically to protect young persons from risks regarding their safety and health.

88. Cases of child labour are scarce in Cyprus. In case where a child is exposed to hazardous conditions to health and any form of violence and/or exploitation, the following laws may apply for his/her protection:

- The Violence in the Family (Prevention and protection of Victims) Laws 2000–2019 and Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (L.115(I)/2021) which provide for the prevention, protection and provision of services to victims of violence in the family;
- The Children's Law, Cap.352, including provisions for the protection of children, and

- The Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law (L.91 (I)/2014), which provides for the protection of children and the provision of services to child victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Answer to question 38 of the guidelines

89. Abuse against the elderly is a criminal offence under the Criminal Code (Cap.154) and when committed by a family member, it is handled under the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law (L.119(I)/2000-2019) and the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (L.115(I)/2021). Services are provided for the protection and support of the victim.

90. The SWS implement articles 24–26 of Directive 2017/541 on combating within the legal framework of the Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law (L.51(I)/2016), in harmonization with the European Directive 2012/29/EE. The Law provides that the SWS are directly responsible for providing free and confidential support services to victims according to their needs and ensure that victims receive:

- (a) Information, advice and support for the exercise of their rights, including actionable right to compensation against the offender, for their role in the criminal proceedings including preparation for participation attendance at the trial as a witness in cooperation with the Mental Health Services (MHS), Directorate of the State Health Services Organisation and the prosecution authorities;
- (b) Information about specialist support services in place or from referral thereof;
- (c) Emotional or psychological support by the MHS;
- (d) Networking with other services, such as psychological support services, housing, financial support and medical services.

Answer to question 39 of the guidelines

91. The ongoing influx of asylum applications, has reached 4% of the country's population, over a period of four years. More than 70% of asylum seekers arrive from Turkey, or through areas not under the effective control of the Cyprus on the first six months of 2021, irregular arrivals reached the number of 4276, counting to 5568 applications, with Syrians been the top nationality of applications reaching 1341. Despite enormous efforts in managing the flows and the examination of asylum applications, Cyprus is burdened in its migratory and asylum system.

92. Cyprus has proceeded with the establishment of a new Reception Centre for Applicants for International Protection, named 'Limnes' in the area of the Pre-departure Centre named 'Menoyia'. Applicants who undergo the accelerate procedure, according to the regulations on qualification, are welcomed in 'Limnes', pending the final decision. The reception capacity is 1000 persons.

93. A preliminary design of a masterplan has already been prepared for both Centers and discussions with European Asylum Support Office (EASO) experts have been initiated in order to follow and apply the EASO Guidelines on Reception Conditions and the relevant standards provided in the Reception Conditions Directive, both are at its final design and EU funding. The operation of the reception centers, including the ones already existed, i.e. Kofinou and Pournara, is supported by EASO, following its standards and indicators.

94. There is an ongoing national implementation of the 'EASO Operating Plan to Cyprus', supporting residents with their housing options with information provision experts and allocation officers' experts provide their assistance and support on the ground with vulnerability officers, information provision officers, reception experts, social workers, flow management experts, registration assistants, amongst others.

95. Effective procedures and assistance are provided at the centres, following the national reception strategy. Competent officers are placed in Pournara, from the Asylum Service, the Civil, Registry and Migration Department, the SWS, the MOH, Immigration Police, Frontex and Europol. For unaccompanied minors, nine institutional officers and three social services

officers are placed on a 24/7. Standard of operating procedures guide the competent authorities through the procedures. A safe zone is also implemented in Pournara.

96. The national reception strategy, includes the examination of a housing scheme and the allocation to private housing.

97. Applicants of International Protection have access to the labour market according to an Administrative Order of the MLWSI in specific sectors, economic activities and occupations. They are granted access to professions and occupations where the supply of workers (Cypriot and EU nationals) is limited. As of 26.10.2018 asylum seekers have access to the labour market one month following the submission of their application. A CoM decision (1/6/19), increased monthly allowance for the material reception conditions (for food and clothing, pocket money and rent allowance) for asylum seekers. A rent deposit is also provided and families are assisted financially.

98. In accordance with the CoM Decision dated 7.10.2020, the SWS cover the expenses of temporary accommodation in hotels or other resorts for families of asylum seekers with minor children and vulnerable persons (e.g. pregnant women, people with disabilities, former children in the care of the Director of the SWS), for a period of one to three months, in order to facilitate accommodation and assist in finding a permanent place of residence in the community.

99. Newly arrived asylum seekers who are referred to the SWS receive immediate emergency financial assistance in cash to cover their basic needs and accommodation. Since October 2020, the Material Reception Conditions to Applicants of International Protection (who have secured ARC) are granted by bank cheques instead of coupons. Soon, the allowances (material reception conditions) of the applicants for International Protection will be paid through bank transfers and actions are already being taken for immediate implementation.

100. Unaccompanied minors are immediately taken under the care and guardianship of the SWS safeguarding access to health, education, accommodation, leisure time, based on their best interests. The significant increase of arrivals of unaccompanied minors in Cyprus, is shown below:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of unaccompanied minors (new arrivals)</i>
2014	54
2015	114
2016	216
2017	224
2018	259
2019	535
2020	313

101. Since 2013, several programmes were developed, including:

(a) The creation of four homes for unaccompanied minors;

(b) Foster Care Programme operated by the SWS in cooperation with the NGO ‘Hope for Children’ CRC Policy Center;

(c) Semi-Independent Living Programme, operated by the SWS in cooperation with NGOs: Part of the Programme is operated by the International Office of Migration in Cyprus with state funding.

102. In 2016 the SWS provided material reception conditions (coupons for food and clothing, pocket money and rent allowance) to 274 households of applicants of international protection, while in 2020 to 6273 households and up to September 2021 to 9715 households.

Answer to question 40(a) of the guidelines

103. Regarding domestic violence and violence against women and children, there are numerous laws enacted and amended. Some of these Laws derive from the NAP for the Prevention/Combating of Violence in the Family. Marital rape and child sexual abuse are criminalized. The following Laws are relevant:

- Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, (L.115 (I)/2021): This Law complies with the Convention of the Council of Europe on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and includes provisions increasing penalties for specific forms of violence including psychological violence, sexual harassment, economic violence and dissemination of pornographic material or sexual content. This Law sets out a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Istanbul Convention;
- Law on Criminalizing Harassment and Stalking (L.114 (I)/2021): This Law provides a framework to combat harassment and stalking. It provides new criminal offences and it also provides for immediate, effective and preventive measures to protect victims. It contains a scale of penalties which correspond to the weight and severity of the offences committed and it also introduces corresponding civil offences;
- Law on Preventing and Combating Sexism (L.209 (I)/2020): This Law endorses the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on ‘Preventing and Combating Sexism’ and constitutes a comprehensive tool to prosecute anyone behaving in a sexist manner and to protect the victims who are subject to sexism, as well as to behaviors which have a detrimental effect on them;
- Law on Establishing Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime (L.51 (I)/2016): This Law provides for the protection and the rights of victims of crimes of violence, sexual abuse, trafficking and other related offences;
- Law on Preventing and Combating the Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography (L.91 (I)/2014): This Law criminalizes all sexual acts against children (under 18), as well as child pornography. It provides for the creation of a Committee and a Council responsible for the implementation of a National Strategy;
- Law on the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims (L.119 (I)/2000): This Law penalizes all domestic violence acts between family members. It also provides for the rights of victims. It includes increased sanctions compared to the Criminal Code, Cap.155;
- Criminal Code (Cap.155): The Criminal Code was amended in 2020 and there are new provisions related to ‘Offences Against Morality’, while for other offences, such as rape, penalties have been increased to life imprisonment.

104. As regards the number of registered cases the following table is relevant. There is an increase in reported cases for 2020, and this is attributed to new police operational and legal measures taken by Cyprus. 75% of reported cases for 2020 were related to violence against women.

Number of domestic violence registered cases for 2015–2019

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
2015	1 036
2016	910
2017	875
2018	1 026
2019	1 288
2020	1 733

Answer to question 40(b) of the guidelines

105. The NAP on the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family 2017–2019, was prepared by the Advisory Committee on the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, in cooperation with all the relevant Ministries and other stakeholders and approved by the CoM in 2017. The Advisory Committee is developing the new NAP.

106. All family violence cases of minors and adults are handled according to the Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures, approved by the CoM in 2002. In 2017 the CoM approved a Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures for Children.

107. The victims are assessed through a police risk assessment protocol for cases of intimate partner violence, used by the Police for all cases of intimate partner violence. Also, the Woman’s House has been funded and is in operation since 2020. This is a multi-agency and multi-professional crisis centre for women victims and their children, based on the Family Justice Centre model and operates as a ‘one-stop-shop’ providing integrated services for victims and their children.

108. Several programmes on domestic violence, are provided by the NGO ‘Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family’, for example a help line, shelters, Woman’s House etc. The Government provides financial support to NGOs and local authorities for the development and implementation of programmes. For the period 2014 to 2020 the financial support granted to the Association, was:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount granted</i>
2014	€105 000
2015	€113 000
2016	€137 000
2017	€228 000
2018	€330 000
2019	€425 000
2020	€762 069

109. According to Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (L.115(I)/2021) there is a Coordinating Body which is responsible for the design, monitoring and implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women.

110. Specialised Police Units for the investigation of cases of domestic violence and other related offences, have been established since 2020 in all the Criminal Investigation Departments (CID) with trained police personnel cooperating with all competent authorities, when investigating domestic violence, child abuse, harassment and stalking and violence against women cases. These Units are strategically supervised by the new Sub-Directorate for Safeguarding, that was established at the Police Headquarters in 2021. Under the Sub-Directorate there are five Specialised Units, as follows: Unit for Handling Domestic Violence and Child Abuse, Unit for Investigating Child Sexual Abuse, Unit for Handling Missing Persons, Unit for Handling Juveniles and Unit for Training and Communications. It has a strategic role since it works on the harmonization of all procedures/protocols regarding safeguarding. Its staff operationally assist in complex domestic violence, gender based and juvenile delinquency cases.

Answer to question 40(c) of the guidelines

111. Training of police officers and other professionals, e.g. Social Workers is ongoing. Officers of the Cyprus Police (CP) are trained, both in Cyprus and abroad, on domestic violence, gender crimes, child abuse and other related issues. These topics are included in the Police Recruits Training Programme at the Police Academy (see Attachment 9), but there are also specialised standardized training programmes for vulnerable groups that are addressed

to frontline officers and CID officers. For this purpose, the CP cooperates with academics and other practitioners to run these programmes.

112. Training on family violence is also provided in training programmes organised by the SWS, for Social Services Officers and those that encounter victims of domestic violence and child abuse.

113. The public awareness raising measures are continuous, both by the CP and the SWS. During the pandemic the CP campaigned for victims to contact the CP through the social media and other means. Other social campaigns were carried out by members of the CP at numerous social places (e.g. shopping malls).

114. The CP has implemented two EU funded projects on training of members of the Police on issues surrounding Violence Against Women, Gender Equality, Risk Assessment etc. The programmes were: (1) ‘Circle of Change/Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Girls through Gender Equality Awareness’ and (2) ‘STEP4GBV’.

Answer to question 41 of the guidelines

115. The Law for the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking and the Exploitation of Human Beings and the Protection of Victims (L.60(I)/2014) (Anti-trafficking Law) implemented European Directive 2011/36/EU providing for the protection and promotion of the rights of victims, without any discrimination regarding sex, race, political beliefs, color, religion, language, national or social origin and association with a national minority, property, birth or other status and special provisions concerning support and protection of child victims during criminal investigations.

116. On 27.7.2019 the penalties were increased up to 25 years imprisonment and the use of sexual services and the demand, receipt or use of the services of a victim of sexual exploitation were criminalized.

117. The Law establishes the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG), which is chaired by the Minister of Interior as the National Coordinator and it frequently meets, to discuss matters regarding coordination, victim housing etc.

118. Three NAPs were in force since 2014. The current NAP for 2019–2021 follows the framework established by the previous NAPs which comprises of five chapters, namely (i) Legal and Strategic Framework; (ii) Crime repression and prosecution; (iii) Victim referral and identification; (iv) Victim protection and support; (v) Prevention. The latest NAP had to be renewed for a period of another year due to the pandemic.

119. The CP is the competent authority for identifying victims of trafficking. An identification manual has been disseminated, based on suggested procedures of identification of international organisations used in police trainings explaining in detail all the necessary steps that the police officer needs to take during the first contact with a presumed victim, the indicators that may lead to a trafficking case and for the identification of victims and traffickers.

120. The victim has a right to compensation against all perpetrators for violation of human rights and the convicted person has civil liability to pay special and general damages to victims, including any delayed debts from exploiting a victim’s labor. A victim, regardless of his/her willingness to cooperate with prosecution authorities for the criminal investigation, prosecution or trial, has a right to legal advice, legal representation and claim compensation or legal aid.

121. Trafficking victims are protected under the Witness Protection Law (L.95 (I)/2001). The Court can order specific protection measures to be implemented during trial, including the trial to be conducted behind closed doors, the placement of a partition in the court room, the use of closed-circuit television and the use of any other means or system that will ensure that the witness does not have direct eye-contact with the accused.

122. The Government constantly trains staff to provide support to victims. Special training programmes are offered to officers of the Ministries, such as labor inspectors and social workers, employment agencies, local authorities, in the field of prevention and identification of potential victims and the CP during investigation.

123. Special protection measures for children are included in the Law. When the child's/parents' interests are in conflict, legal assistance is pursued by the Commissioner for Children's Rights. An unaccompanied minor, is placed under the care of the SWS who is appointed as the representative of the child in criminal investigation proceedings and in cooperation with the Commissioner.

124. According to the Law, if a person or service believes or has reasonable suspicion that any person may be a victim of trafficking, he/she refers the potential victim to the SWS. Social Welfare Officers provide potential victims, in a language that they can understand, information concerning their rights and access to services and notify the CP Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OoCTHB), which is responsible for the official identification of trafficking victims.

125. The SWS as a first responder authority, in consultation with the MCG, have developed a standard referral form, introduced in 2019 to improve the identification and referral of potential victims into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and to improve data collection as well.

126. All victims are entitled to financial, psychological and social support including housing. An on-call system operates on 24/7, for the effective management and referral of a victim their support and accommodation. A specialised shelter (16 places) for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation operates under the authority of the SWS. Upon admission, the Social Welfare Officer informs the victim about the shelter regulations and their rights and obligations. The victim may remain in the shelter for a period not exceeding four weeks. However, under certain circumstances accommodation can be extended. The shelter is one of the options available to accommodate only women victims of sexual exploitation.

127. All non-EU nationals who are victims of trafficking have free access to employment under the same terms during the judicial examination of their case. Victims are assisted in finding employment by trained and qualified Employment Counsellors on an individual approach and are also informed of language courses (Greek and English) and other training opportunities.

128. In order to enforce the provisions of the Private Employment Agencies Laws and Regulations, aiming to prevent and combat trafficking, the DoL has intensified the inspections of the private employment agencies. The NRM provides appropriate guidance and standard operating procedures for handling victims and potential victims of human trafficking (including identifying and referring victims to services), so that victims and potential victims have access to their rights.

129. Members of the CP attend seminars related to Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) issues, gender-based violence and gender sensitive approaches. Members of the OoCTHB and the Police in general attend specialised trainings and seminars on human trafficking, child trafficking, investigatory issues, financial investigations in trafficking cases, victim identification etc. in Cyprus and abroad (CP Academy, European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training etc.).

130. The trainings are addressed to all police members of all ranks who come in contact with (presumed) victims of trafficking. The OoCTHB takes part in as many research and cooperation projects as possible related to trafficking.

131. The tables in Attachment 10 illustrate the country of origin, gender and age of identified victims per year.

Article 11 of the Covenant

A. The right to the continuous improvement of living conditions

Answer to question 42 of the guidelines

132. Mechanisms used to monitor the depth of poverty are the following:

- GMI;

- Household allowance for pensioners on low incomes;
- Child Benefit (including Single Parent Benefit).

133. Further information about the above benefits is mentioned in the answer to question 43 below.

Answer to question 43 of the guidelines

134. Cyprus, via the absorption of relevant EU funds, the development of targeted measures and policies, and the implementation of various projects, is focusing on making urban and rural communities more inclusive and sustainable. Strategies like the ‘Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Plans’ and the ‘Strategy for the sustainable development of rural communities and municipalities’ drive key initiatives like urban mobility projects and the revitalization of main historic centres suffering from broad degradation and socioeconomic challenges. The new housing support scheme for rural and remote areas is reassessed regularly to increase incentives for young couples and large families to relocate and revive rural communities.

135. From January 2017–December 2020, urban local authorities were granted a total of €115 mln to implement 25 projects through the European Regional Development Fund in the context of Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Plans/Strategies for the main historic centres of the four urban municipalities which still suffer from broad degradation and socioeconomic challenges including abandoned commercial areas and houses, poverty and unemployment, inadequate sustainable transport systems, insufficient parking spaces and limited green spaces.

136. In October 2019 the National Strategy for the Development of Mountain Communities was adopted which aims in revitalizing the region of the Troodos mountain communities by creating jobs, promoting tourism and supporting agricultural and cottage industries. To this regard, new housing policies aiming for a more affordable housing options both in urban and in rural areas are promoted. In addition, the local Government reform aims to help local communities tackle inefficiencies, become more sustainable and provide a higher quality of life for its citizens.

137. Nineteen similar projects, of a total of €15 million were promoted for implementation in the rural areas through the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development. The project’s focus is on urban mobility actions, like footpaths and safe access for all, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. The implementation of the projects is scheduled to continue within the new programming period of 2021–2027.

138. The ‘Strategy for the sustainable development of rural communities and municipalities’, including agrotourism activities are currently updated, in an effort to assess the needs and challenges of rural communities and identify their assets for development.

139. A new Housing Policy Framework introduced in 2019 enhances spatial planning policies for affordable housing, both for freehold house-ownerships and rental tenures. The new policy aims to increase the supply of affordable housing units and at the same time allocate public funds for housing purposes to specific population groups and targeted areas, in a more efficient and effective way, by adopting simplified procedures. Effort is being made to create conditions for the production of affordable housing and the creation of a sufficient number of housing units.

140. Detailed information on the GMI is provided in *Attachment 11*.

141. Further to the existing measures implemented addressing child poverty, the Government decided to devote the EU funding provided through the Fund of European Aid to the most deprived on efforts to combat child deprivation and poverty.

142. The project ‘Baby’s Dowry’, was launched by the MLWSI on 8.12.2017 providing basic material assistance to newborn babies of deprived families. Eligible to receive it are GMI recipients, Public Assistance Recipients and people who face multiple social and financial difficulties. Social inclusion activities are conducted, aiming at the social integration of the most deprived. As a prerequisite to receiving the basic material assistance, the families of the beneficiaries attend training on enhancing parental skills. Support and

information about programmes that enhance their employability is also provided. 2118 families have benefited from the project, until July 2021, with a total amount of €2.473.941.

143. The SWS are in the process of restructuring for the improvement of accessibility, the enhancement of individualised and holistic support to people and their families through a person-centered approach and practices so that the services provided are effective and the rights of vulnerable people and their well-being are safeguarded. This project is funded by the European Social Fund. The main strands of actions include the enhancement of human resources, among others, through training and staff, review of the Service's manuals, legislations, working methods, the promotion of co-operation and synergies with the local authorities, the civil society and other competent governmental and non-governmental authorities, through among others the signing of protocols of cooperation. A Central Multidisciplinary Group and District Multidisciplinary Groups were established in 2020, with the participation of officers from several governmental services. Psychologists, psychiatrists and child-psychiatrists will join the groups in 2021. The SWS are in the process of establishing social workers' services at community level to better respond to social needs at the local level.

144. In 2020 a new Scheme providing support and financial aid to recently released prisoners aiming to secure a minimum standard of living and their social reintegration was introduced.

B. The right to adequate food

Answer to question 44 of the guidelines

145. The Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (MARDE) contributing to the EU goals, has within its priorities the support of locally produced, affordable food of high quality and ensuring the availability of food for its citizens. This is achieved by pursuing the goals of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and implementing related legislation. The CAP goals are mainly supported by the Rural Development Programme (RDP)/Direct payments and the Common Market Organisation. Actions under the CAP include, supporting sustainable growth for agriculture and implementing high standards for food production responding to consumers demands and ensuring food security.

146. Under the current RDP and in order to ensure the availability of affordable food in terms of quantity and quality the MARDE implements agro-environmental and other measures of the RDP, such as the exclusion of the use of chemical herbicides in various cultivations and promotion of organic farming. Additionally, in order to ensure the supply of safe food to the market, the Department of Agriculture conducts sampling and analysis of plant products, to control the implementation of legislation on the sustainable use of plant protection products. Respectively, the Health Services carry out sampling and analysis of food of plant origin in order to ensure that they do not contain residues of pesticides at levels beyond those permitted by the relevant legislation. These measures aim to secure the production of qualitatively upgraded and safe agricultural products for the benefit of both producers and consumers.

147. In addition, the MARDE implements the EU Legislation on quality systems for agricultural products and food (Reg. (EE) 1151/2012) and the organic production and labeling of organic products (Reg. (EC) 834/2007). By implementing food labeling as per EU standards, including the protection and labeling of quality products, the high quality of foods (produced or imported) is ensured. Within the COVID-19 pandemic period, additional measures were, and still are, undertaken to support farmer's resilience and production levels strengthening food availability and satisfying citizens demands.

Answer to question 45 of the guidelines

148. With the inclusion of the Mediterranean Diet in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO, Cyprus became a Mediterranean Diet country and Agros Village Cyprus' respective emblematic community. The MARDE collaborates with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECSY) and other stakeholders to

promote the Mediterranean Diet, so that the public is informed about the production and consumption processes of products included in the Mediterranean Diet.

149. Furthermore, in the current context of the declining consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables and milk products, especially among children, as well as of an increasing incidence of child obesity as a result of consumption habits geared to highly processed foods, the need to promote healthy eating habits is highly essential. Therefore, the MARDE in cooperation with the MOECSY has been implementing the European Union Aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments, since 2009.

Answer to question 46 of the guidelines

150. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 47 of the guidelines

151. Non-applicable.

C. The right to water

Answer to question 48(a) of the guidelines

152. Cyprus policy is to satisfy the water demand for domestic, agricultural, industrial, environmental and other uses, to the maximum extent possible, through the optimum and sustainable use of conventional and non-conventional water resources and at the same time to secure the quality and protection of water resources and the environment according to the Integrated Water Management Law (L.79 (I)/2010). The measures taken are augmentation of water supply through desalination and maximization of reuse of tertiary treated wastewater for irrigation in replacement of equal quantities of fresh water for domestic purposes

Answer to question 48(b) of the guidelines

153. Please refer to the answer given in question 51 below.

Answer to question 48(c) of the guidelines

154. Affordability for drinking as well as irrigation water services was examined during the special study for the implementation of article 9 of Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The aim was to ensure that water services are provided at affordable prices to everyone.

Answer to question 48(d) of the guidelines

155. The quality of water is monitored by an authorised quality-control system, based on the Quality of Water Intended for Human Consumption (Monitoring and Control) Law (L.87(I)/2001), which targets accuracy and fast response.

Answer to question 49 of the guidelines

156. Water-consciousness campaigns are launched on a constant basis to raise awareness on water-saving issues, the protection of the aquatic environment and the hygienic use of water, through lectures carried out by the Water Development Department both at schools and groups of farmers and through media broadcasts, advertisements, leaflets and events related to water.

157. The extensive consultation undertaken by the Department of Agriculture for the water use in agriculture has in general increased public awareness and provided valuable information for sustainable irrigation and water management. Increasing the productivity of water, the use of non-conventional irrigation waters, crop diversification, and crop rotation are some of the adaptation/mitigation measures of minimize water wastage.

D. The right to adequate housing

Answer to question 50 of the guidelines

158. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 51(a) of the guidelines

159. According to the Land Development Corporation Law (L.42/1980), the Cyprus Land Development Organisation acquires land which separates into plots or allocates for the construction of residences and apartments. These constructions are available to individuals or families who are unable to solve their housing problem on their own.

160. The Organisation is working on housing projects throughout Cyprus. Plot separation is mainly available in rural areas where there is a need for accommodating young couples. There are income criteria and other criteria, such as movable and immovable property, housing conditions etc. EU citizens are also entitled to apply as well as permanent residents of Cyprus provided that they have a continuous legal residence in Cyprus for five years. According to the CoM decision dated 2.5.2012 the Organisation is entitled to offer residences for sale to applicants who do not own any other residence or sizable assets (exceeding €500.000) and whose income exceeds the limits set out by the Housing Scheme for Medium-Income Individuals/Households.

Answer to question 51(b) of the guidelines

161. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 51 (c) of the guidelines

162. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 52 of the guidelines

163. According to the Town Planning Law (L.90/1972), the purpose of a Local Plan is to secure orderly development in the interest of the health, amenity, convenience and general welfare of the community, to indicate the general principles upon which development in the area will be promoted and controlled, to guide the selection of, or to define, sites for particular purposes, whether by the carrying out of development thereon or otherwise, to protect features or areas of social, historical or architectural importance, to safeguard routes for highways and other services and indicate the stages by which development should be carried out.

164. Noxious industries and farms are located in areas specifically designed as such, outside the main urban area, i.e. at locations where nuisance, including dirt or noise are not considered to impact urban/rural uses, or areas of outstanding environmental quality.

165. According to the Law, where it appears to the Planning Authority:

(a) That any development of immovable property has been carried out without the grant of planning permission required in that behalf or

(b) That any conditions of limitations subject to which planning permission was granted have not been complied with, the Planning Authority may, if in the interests of proper planning it considers it expedient to do so, serve notice (in the Law is referred to as an ‘enforcement notice’).

166. An enforcement notice may require such steps to be taken, within such period as may be so specified, as are requisite for the removal of the unauthorised development and, where appropriate, the restoring of the immovable property to its condition before the alleged unauthorised development took place.

167. According the same Law, where an enforcement notice has been served on the person who, at the time when the notice was served on him/her, was the owner of the immovable property to which it relates, then, if any steps required by the notice to be taken have not been

taken within the period allowed for compliance with the notice, that person shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine or other judicial measures.

Answer to question 53 of the guidelines

168. Non-applicable.

Answer to question 54 of the guidelines

169. Non-applicable.

Article 12 of the Covenant

Answer to question 55 of the guidelines

170. Based on the General Health System Law (L.89(I)/2001), the General Health System (GHS) was gradually introduced, with the outpatient health care on 1.6.2019, the Inpatient Health Care on 1.6.2020, the services of Accident and Emergency Departments on 1.9.2020 and the Preventive Dental Care, Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Services on 1.12.2020.

171. The GHS is a comprehensive healthcare system which provides equal access to healthcare services, independently from payment of contributions. Beneficiaries without an income (unemployed, children, students, soldiers and others) have equal access to healthcare services. It provides access to healthcare services through Personal Doctor (PD). PDs within the primary care are the first point of contact for beneficiaries and are responsible to provide all required healthcare services as well as to guide and refer them to more specialised healthcare services when and if is needed. Beneficiaries may choose the specialist doctor, pharmacy, laboratory, hospital or any other private or public healthcare provider within the GHS.

Answer to question 56(a) of the guidelines

172. The GHS is a comprehensive, modern, patient-centric healthcare system aiming to provide quality healthcare services to beneficiaries, including older persons and persons with disabilities. Among its beneficiaries are the permanent residents in the areas under the effective control of Cyprus in one of the following categories:

- Cypriot citizens;
- European citizens who work or hold a permanent residence status;
- Third country nationals (non-EU citizens) who hold a permanent residence status or a right of equal treatment;
- Members of the families of the above categories;
- Refugees and persons with a status of supplementary protection.

173. The main features of the system are:

- Universal coverage of the population;
- Equal and equitable treatment of all beneficiaries;
- Provision of a comprehensive package of healthcare services;
- Freedom of choice of provider by the beneficiaries;
- Social reciprocity.

174. The healthcare services that are covered by the GHS are:

- Healthcare services by personal doctors;
- Healthcare services by specialist doctors;
- Pharmaceutical products;
- Laboratory tests;

- Inpatient healthcare services;
- Healthcare services in cases of accidents and emergencies;
- Ambulance services;
- Healthcare services by nurses, midwives, clinical psychologists, clinical dieticians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech pathologists;
- Preventive dental healthcare services;
- Palliative healthcare and medical rehabilitation;

Answer to question 56(b) of the guidelines

175. The GHS is financed through large-scale contributions from employees, employers, Government, incomers, retirees. The contribution rate for each category is set by the General Health System (Amending) Law (L.74 (I)/2017), as in Attachment 12.

176. The GHS covers all medical care needs of beneficiaries including chronic, rare and serious conditions, as explained in paragraph 173.

Answer to question 56(c) of the guidelines

177. The implementation of Regulation (EU) 2017/745 on medical devices and Regulation (EU) 2017/746 on in vitro diagnostic medical devices which aim to ensure the smooth functioning of the internal market as regards medical devices and in vitro diagnostic medical devices, taking as a base a high level of protection of health for patients and users, ensures the quality of these products.

178. Within the EU, including Cyprus, the safety, efficacy and quality of all medicines are legally regulated. Centrally authorised products are medicines with a single marketing authorisation issued by the European Commission and valid across the EU.

179. Medicines not authorised via the central route (those that are authorised via the European procedures Decentralised Procedure, Mutual Recognition Procedure and those authorised via the National Procedure) follow a very similar process for authorisation, but the marketing authorisation is issued by the national competent authorities of the Member States.

180. Legislation and European guidelines are in place which dictate the strict assessment, approval and monitoring of clinical trials required to support the Marketing Authorisation. Legislation and guidelines ensure the enforcement of Good Manufacturing Practice, Good Distribution Practice, Good Pharmacovigilance Practice, Good Clinical Practice, throughout the entire lifecycle of a medicine, all of which are inspected regularly using a risk-based approach. The EU-wide legislation regulating supply chains to prevent falsified medicines from entering the supply chains adds further protection for the public, whilst legislation regulating the pricing of medicines provides a highly regulated market for these essential products. Legislation regulating the practice of pharmacy provides the final checkpoint ensuring that pharmacies and pharmacists are supplying only authorised, safe, efficacious and quality medicines to the public, in line with the product's marketing authorisation.

181. The European and national legislation also establishes respective Committees and Councils which are required for the above activities composed by experts from national competent authorities of each Member State and experts appointed by the European Commission. Experts from the Pharmaceutical Services Department of the Ministry of Health (MOH) represent Cyprus in these committees. Respectively, at national level, the Drugs Council is the decision making and issuing body for all regulatory activities involving medicines.

Answer to question 56(d) of the guidelines

182. The Educational Sector of the Nursing Services of the MOH established in 2013, provides continuous professional development opportunities for nurses, midwives and health visitors. These programmes vary, in terms of duration and topic, according to the educational

needs of nurses and midwives, but all are structured to protect and preserve human rights, the right to life and human dignity, gender equality, minority rights, ill treatment.

183. A valid license to practice nursing and midwifery in Cyprus is required by respective law and this license must be renewed every four years. In order for their license to be renewed, nurses/midwives need to provide evidence of at least 32 hours of training or 20 International credits of continuous professional development.

184. For resident doctors, training is implemented based on the guidelines set by the Central Board of Health in Greece and supervised by the Medical Training Council in Cyprus with the cooperation of the MOH. Resident doctors need to complete a training log book in each specialty, based on the medical practice being undertaken in each clinic during their training, in addition to the seminar participation, presentation, research opportunities being provided during their residency training. The MOH partly subsidizes the cost of annual participation in training courses, conferences and subscription in scientific journals.

185. The personnel under the administration of the MOH, as well as the personnel of public hospitals including healthcare staff, attend seminars at the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration which also contributes to their professional development.

Answer to question 57(a) of the guidelines

186. Actions to reduce the harmful consumption of alcohol are being promoted as part of the National Strategy for Addressing Dependence on Illicit Substances and the Harmful Use of Alcohol. These actions/interventions are addressed to the whole population, but also specific interventions are addressed to vulnerable and marginalized groups of women (Mental Health/Addiction/Dual Diagnosis). Promoting actions through education, awareness-raising, access to family planning and pre-natal care to address the harm associated with consumption/heavy episodic consumption of alcohol among pregnant women. Includes the target groups pregnant women and unborn child for prevention of the Alcohol Fetal Syndrome, the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and improvement of maternal health.

187. The National Strategy promotes the healthy lifestyle during pregnancy and breastfeeding periods by providing useful information in leaflets that have been printed in four languages apart from Greek, in order to spread knowledge to as many women as possible in the multicultural society of Cyprus.

188. A big innovation is the direct access of pregnant women to the midwife or the visit of midwife postnatal at home. A midwife has the essential competencies, education and autonomy to work in partnership with women during all the stages of her life and mostly during pregnancy. This measure promotes the partnership of midwife with woman to strengthen her own capabilities to care for herself and her family, while the same time improves the maternal and child outcomes.

189. Midwives organise every week, all around Cyprus, free educational lessons for the preparation of parenthood, breastfeeding, healthy mother habits in nutrition, exercise and the preparation of normal birth through the method of psychoprophylaxis in an attempt to empower women asking for their rights prenatal, during labour and post-natal. Moreover, to receive maternity care that will ensure the least medical interventions in labour, improving at the same time their psycho-social outcomes, increasing birth spacing and contraceptive use. In some places, midwives and health visitors organise these lessons in collaboration with other health professionals, as neonatologist, anaesthetist and the health topics apart from the above, include issues related with breastfeeding, child development, diseases, accidents, vaccinations, infant nutrition and care.

190. The School Health Services of the MOH aim at maintaining health promotion of children and adolescents who attend junior and high schools, in rural and urban area. The mission is the early detection, treatment and monitoring of health problems of children at school, the development of healthy attitudes and behavior, the assurance of hygienic environment at school and the prevention of communicable diseases. Services are provided free of charge to the schools by School Doctors and Health Visitors.

191. School Health Visitors implement sex education programmes in primary and secondary Education. In particular, new sex education programmes have been revised to

create knowledge, skills development and empowerment of children and adolescents, so that they can withstand the challenges they face. The new programmes use active and experiential learning methods with a variety of interactive tools.

192. In primary education, sex education programmes include topics such as reproductive parts (1st grade), preadolescence (5th grade), adolescence and AIDS (6th grade). Specifically, a Health Education Programme about adolescence/menstruation is addressed to pupils of the 6th grade. This programme includes interactive activities, role-playing games and anonymous question boxes. Through active/experiential learning, children learn about the biological and emotional changes that occur during adolescence. At the same time, through games, children have the opportunity to express questions and feelings and receive useful information. Printed material on the subject is also handed out to children at the end of the programme.

193. In secondary education, sex education programmes include topics, such as adolescence (1st grade gymnasium), AIDS (3rd grade gymnasium and 1st grade lyceum), sexually transmitted diseases and contraceptive methods (2nd grade lyceum). At the same time, during the school year, they provide individual counselling on sexual and reproductive health to pupils. Specifically, a Heath Education Programme about Contraception and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), is addressed to pupils of the 2nd and 3rd grades of the lyceum. The aims of the programme are to help the pupils realise the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy; acquire knowledge regarding the most common contraception methods and STDs; to be able to prevent an unwanted pregnancy and protect themselves from STDs.

194. The Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics of the Nursing Services offer preventive services to mother, infant/child and generally to the whole family in order to preserve and promote health and to prevent illness. Services are provided free of charge to non-beneficiaries in the GHS within a network of the health care departments where the Centres for primary Health Care of the Hospitals, Rural and Urban Health Centres are situated. The Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics are staffed with Health Visitors.

195. Screening programmes are provided at the Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics includes preventative examinations of infants and pre-school age children. such as checking the normal development of the infant and child (weight, height, head circumference), monitoring the motional development of the infant and child, carrying out a vision acuity test of the infant and child, testing the hearing ability of the infant and child, monitoring the psycho-emotional development of the infant and child.

196. At the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres the child also receives all routine vaccinations according to the MOH Vaccination Schedule. According to the regulations of the Health Insurance System Paediatricians vaccinate children and Health Visitors provide services to children whose vaccination programme is not covered by the Health Insurance System.

Answer to question 57(b) of the guidelines

197. Public Health Services (PHS) and municipalities in collaboration with the State General Laboratory implement an annual national control programme for Quality of Water Intended for Human Consumption, which is provided through public network all over Cyprus controlled area. Monitoring is applied at the point of ‘consumer’s tap’ at more than 1400 designated sampling points all over Cyprus.

198. Samples of water are taken by the PHS officers from the tap of the premises from where the owner usually obtains water for drinking, cooking, or for personal cleanliness; (b) for water supplied from a tanker, at the point at which it flows out from the tanker; (c) for water supplied in bottles or containers, at the point at which the water is put into the bottles or containers; (d) for water used in a food-production undertaking, at the point where the water flows out to be used for such production and sent to the State General Laboratory for analyses. The sampling points including premises that host children and teenagers, such as kindergartens and schools and places where are immunocompromised and vulnerable groups of people.

199. The law applied by the MOH is fully harmonized with the European Framework and particularly with Directive 98/83/EC and relevant amendments.

200. According to the Protection of Water of Human Consumption Law (L.87(I)/2001), implementing Directive 98/83/EC, the quality of drinking water (chemical and microbiological) as final product, is constantly monitored by the PHS and local authorities (municipalities) on consumer tap. The monitoring system includes:

- Record of all drinking water sources;
- On-site inspection of drinking water sources (spring or boreholes) for investigation of environmental conditions of each source;
- Sampling for chemical and microbiological analyses;
- Evaluation of results;
- Monitoring the effectiveness of chlorination process and chlorine residual;
- Investigation of possible causes of contamination;
- Informing competent bodies for implementing any remedial action needed and general public about the results of chemical and microbiological analyses.

201. Also, according to the above legislation, there is an extensive quality control of bottled and potable water supplied via water tankers or water vending machines.

202. The PHS main target is to protect consumers' health by ensuring that water consumed, distributed, marketed or produced in the island, meets the highest parametric standards specified in drinking water legislation. Measures that obtained by the MOH for the protection of public health are the prevention of water borne infections, secures adequate standards for quality and fitness of water, and adequate consumer's information. In case that a result of the analyses of any sample exceeds the value prescribed in the legislation the Director of the PHS informs the public using the water from which the sample was taken about the potential risk to human health and informs the water supplier about the findings and actions needed to effectively protect public health, such as cleaning and disinfection of community water tank or network (pipes), hyperchlorination, temporary interruption of water supply or some restrictions on use of water.

203. Legionella control programme is implemented for the protection of vulnerable groups in the so-called priority establishments such as hospitals, military camps, schools etc.

204. In case of communicable or infectious disease incident, reported by a medical doctor related either to waterborne disease or to foodborne disease, the PHS immediately proceed to investigation for the possible identification of infection source.

Answer to question 57(c) of the guidelines

205. The National Committee for tackling the antivaccination phenomenon in Cyprus continued its activities related to educating teachers at secondary schools, as well as educating the public with talks and presentations through the media. Lectures and seminars are given in young adults studying in Cyprus universities.

206. During the European Immunization Week, the MOH contacted raising awareness activities like seminars, written brochures, videos and posters to sensitize public opinion, knowledge and acceptability in vaccination necessity.

207. Organisation of conferences addressed to health care workers including topics aiming to increase awareness of the antivaccination phenomenon, how to approach the reluctant parent and also the value of vaccinations.

208. The GHS made general practitioners, internal medicine doctors and paediatricians the main holders in persuading people and parents about the vaccination advantages. Cyprus residents that are not assigned through the GHS, can also have free access to Government Immunization Centers and do the appropriate vaccination. Such centers are situated even at the most distant areas. The health visitors who serve at these centers make intensive efforts

to attract mothers and children especially infants and toddlers in order to do their proper immunizations according to national immunization schedule.

209. The medical services (school health services/visitors) communicate with parents through written announcements in order to sensitize immunization process.

210. Migrants that arrive on the shores and have no record for their immunization status are offered various vaccines.

211. The National Vaccination Committee which has 3-year term (2018–2021) is responsible to suggest vaccination schedules and strategies for children-teens, for adults but also for special groups of people (immunocompromised, chronic diseases, transplant recipients etc.).

Answer to question 57(d) of the guidelines

212. The National Addiction Authority of Cyprus (NAAC) is the state authority responsible for the coordination, implementation and regulation of all issues in the field of substance use and gambling disorder. As provided in the Prevention of the Use and Dissemination of Drugs and Other Addictive Substances Law (L. 164(I)/2017), the NAAC is responsible among others for the drafting of the national strategy and Action Plan (AP) on drugs and other psychoactive substances and the promotion, monitoring and control of its implementation, as well as coordination of all activities regarding psychoactive substances by the various governmental services, NGO agencies or private sector. It is also responsible for licensure, evaluation and coordination (as well as part of the funding) of all programmes, actions and activities related to psychoactive substances offered by relevant providers, irrespective of their status (public, NGOs etc.).

213. The National Strategy for Addressing Addictions 2021–2028 and specifically the new AP 2021–2024 prepared by the NAAC includes measures and actions to be taken by Ministries, NGOs in order to prevent the abuse of alcohol and tobacco and use of illicit drugs and other harmful substances, in particular among children and adolescents.

214. The general objectives of the prevention pillar are described in Attachment 13.

215. The NAAC through the accreditation procedure has licensed 36 prevention programmes and funded 24 of them through a call for tenders' procedure and in collaboration with municipalities. The main axes of the licensed programmes were information dissemination about illegal and legal substances like alcohol and tobacco, strengthening of self-development skills, self-esteem, enhancement of resilience factors, attitude change, improvement of communication and training of teachers and parents. The main axes of the funded programmes were to identify and help vulnerable children by reducing exposure to risk factors and behaviors, while reinforcing protective factors and behaviors. This is achieved through assistance with lessons, psychological counselling and referral to other available social services.

216. Through the national strategy, the NAAC gives priority to ensuring accessibility to treatment and ensuring the adequacy of social reintegration services. In this context, there are 21 specialised outpatient centers (seven of which is substitution treatment), one low threshold agency, two public programmes in prison (one of which is a substitution programme) and an NGO that offers self-help support groups to drug users accredited by the NAAC. As to the inpatient system, it consists of two hospital-based residential drug treatment, one therapeutic community and three residential treatment programmes (non-hospital based). All treatment programmes also offer help support for families.

217. There are nine social reintegration programmes providing services. While one of these programmes was distinct and separate from the treatment programme, the rest were incorporated/integral part of the treatment process. Drug users can receive financial assistance under the NAAC's Scheme for Financial Assistance for the Rehabilitation of Former Substance-Dependent Persons covering expenses related to accommodation, basic appliances, studies, and other. Other services offered to drug users in relation to social reintegration include:

- Provision of training and occupational counselling;

- Development and implementation of a training programme on general occupational issues;
- Development and implementation of training programmes on technical issues;
- Placement in enterprises for practical training and monitoring.

Answer to question 57(e) of the guidelines

218. Regarding the measures taken to prevent HIV/AIDS and other STDs, these are guided by the implementation of the existing National Strategic Plan.

219. Based on the dynamics of the epidemiology, educational programmes are implemented that target high risk groups such as political refugees and asylum seekers. In the same context, similar programmes are being developed for the general population, both in collaboration with local and European NGOs.

220. Regarding children and adolescents, educational programmes are implemented by school health services.

221. In relation to the social aspects of the infection, legislation provides monthly financial support to people living with HIV, in addition to the free healthcare and psychological support services provided at the national reference clinic for HIV in Cyprus.

Answer to question 57(f) of the guidelines

222. Not-applicable. A GHS is in place.

Answer to question 57(g) of the guidelines

223. In order to ensure adequate treatment and care for patients at Athalassa Hospital, meetings of the interprofessional team are held on a weekly basis, in which all health professionals of each clinic who provide health services to each patient participate.

224. By using a specific tool, a daily check is made on the adequacy of the staffing of the Ward to Nursing Staff in relation to the number of patients hospitalized, in order to provide the necessary safety and care to the hospitalized.

225. As far as the periodic inspection is concerned, in addition to the daily check carried out by the chief nursing officers, the Committee for the Supervision and Protection of the Rights of Mentally Ill Patients, based on the Psychiatric Care Law (L.77 (I)/1997):

- Monitors the application of the Law and identifies any flaws and promotes amendments;
- Makes recommendations on the suitability of the care centres;
- Inspects the centres and the places where patients are staying or the centres where out-patient care is provided after the termination of their hospitalization;
- Provides any kind of advice or guidance regarding the Law and the rights of patients;
- Examines complaints regarding the detention and provision of hospitalization in any centre;
- Submits the findings and suggestions to the Minister and submits recommendations for the revocation of the centre's operating license.

226. Regarding judicial control of confinement, the renewal of Court Orders of compulsory hospitalization is made following a collective decision of the interprofessional team and on behalf of the MHS a specific officer has been appointed who acts as an interconnector for the issues of renewal of Court Orders.

Article 13 of the Covenant

Answer to question 58 of the guidelines

227. Please refer to Previous Report paras. 171–172.

228. Since 2015 schools are required to implement the anti-racist policy of the MOECSY ‘Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents’. The policy conceptualizes racism in a broad manner, including all sorts of discrimination. It includes definitions of basic concepts, outlines the responsibilities and commitments expected by each member of the school community and provides the steps to be followed by schools in order to deal with racist incidents in a practical manner. Since the anti-racist policy views diversity as a multidimensional phenomenon, it contributes towards the decrease of bullying and discrimination based on any form of diversity in schools. The Pedagogical Institute has conducted several actions during the school year 2020–2021 in order to support teachers and schools implementing the anti-racist policy. At the same time, the anti-racist policy website is continually updated with information on implementation issues, supporting material and answers to frequently asked questions. A support line has been operating throughout the year.

229. Since 2017, the MOECSY has been supporting the IMAGINE programme, in collaboration with the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research at the ‘Home for Cooperation’. The programme includes experiential activities related to human rights and anti-racism within the education for a culture of peace. It is under the auspices of the Bi-communal Technical Committee on Education and has been approved by the negotiators of the two communities. Following the successful completion of the initial activities of the programme (2017–2019) and the participation of approximately 5000 pupils and 600 teachers from all the communities in Cyprus, the programme continued for the school year 2019–2020, enriched with more activities and meetings between children. As all aspects of education, the implementation of the programme was limited in 2020–2021, due to the pandemic restrictions.

Answer to question 59 of the guidelines

230. Please refer to Previous Report paras. 173–176.

231. The MOECSY, following a decision of the CoM in 2018, has gradually increased the school starting age for pre-primary class from the age of 4 years and 8 months to the age of 5 and for the 1st grade of primary school from the age of 5 years and 8 months to the age of 6. However, pre-primary education has remained compulsory from the age of 4 years and 8 months, as it was before.

232. The MOECSY provides breakfast to pupils in need from all levels of education with an aim to secure that children from disadvantaged families are offered a nutritious breakfast, so as to minimize the possibility of detrimental consequences from possible malnutrition which can affect not only pupils’ school performance, but also their overall physical and mental health and can potentially lead to social exclusion and increase the risk of early school leaving. Graduate pupils who participate in this scheme are also exempted from both the obligation to pay fees for participating in the final examinations, as well as from the obligation to pay fees for issuing their leaving certificate. Individuals attending Lifelong Learning Programmes of Vocational Education and Training pay limited fees.

Answer to question 60 of the guidelines

233. Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) is available and accessible to all and is provided in 12 Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training nationwide. In the context of a wider effort to modernize the education system, the competent Department has recently upgraded the STVE by modernizing its structure and content as well as by redefining and implementing new programmes and new fields of study.

234. The main aim of this effort is:

(a) To develop skilled, suitably qualified and flexible individuals, who will have the basic skills, as well as the specific professional knowledge, skills and competences to better seize opportunities and address challenges in society, the economy and the workplace, and

(b) To create a suitable background for further technical and technological studies. Currently, fields of study are offered in two directions: theoretical and practical.

235. The balanced programme of general education, technological specialization and laboratory practice offered in both directions, aims at preparing pupils for their employment in the Industry as well as for continuing their academic studies in higher education.

236. In order to promote further participation in secondary technical and vocational education and support the integration of school dropouts into the workplace and the society in general, the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training has also increased the number of Evening Schools of Technical and Vocational Education (ESTVE) from two to five. In addition, a new model and timetable were formed, taking into account key features of models of Evening Schools and Technical Schools in Europe. The new model of ESTVE is based on the principles and aspirations of lifelong education and adult education and responds to pupils needs, as it boosts self-confidence and integrates them in social networks and different environments (work, social, cultural). Active and creative learning with the use of technology, pupil support with social measures and flexible programmes, which lead to either groups orientation and directions aiming at access to higher education, are some of the key features of the new model of ESTVE. ESTVE accepts citizens of all ages, who hold a leaving certificate from the gymnasium and wish to complete their studies in Secondary Technical and Vocational Education. ESTVE graduates are qualified to claim a job in the productive sectors of the economy. The fields of study offered at ESTVE are equivalent to the ones offered at STVE. Attendance is free and leads to obtaining a leaving certificate, which is equivalent to that provided by the morning Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training and corresponds to Level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework. It is worthwhile mentioning that in ESTVE childcare is offered to facilitate the attendance of parents-apprentices.

Answer to question 61 of the guidelines

237. Please refer to Previous Report paras. 179–182 and 184.

238. For admission to undergraduate studies to the public universities, students need to pass the Pancyprian Entrance Examinations. Institutions of Higher Education have additional entrance criteria for undergraduate studies, whereas for admission to a postgraduate programme, candidates must, at least, hold a degree from an accredited Institution of Higher Education. Cypriot and European students do not need to pay fees for undergraduate studies at the public universities.

239. The fees are covered by the Government. The State Welfare Law (L.203 (I)/2015), with effect from the academic year 2015–2016, replaced the Student Grant Law [L.188 (I)/2011, as amended]. In accordance with the aforementioned law, student grants and allowances are given to beneficiaries residing in the Government-controlled areas, whose child regularly attends a recognized/accredited tertiary educational institute (private or public), in Cyprus or abroad, for an undergraduate or graduate course of study and meets the relevant income and property-assets criteria. Student allowances are given to subsidize specific needs, taking into account economic, property, social and other criteria. The students entitled arise from the evaluation of their applications, which is based on a points system that takes into account economic and social criteria, up to the amount of available funds.

240. The table below shows the student grant rates for the academic year 2020–2021:

Student grant rates for the academic year 2020–2021

<i>Family income during 2020</i>	<i>Basic amount of student grant</i>	<i>Additional amount of student grant for families whose student pays tuition fees (maximum amount) or have three or more dependent children</i>
Up to €39 000	€1 710	€855
€39 000.01–€49 000.00	€1 580	€790
€49 000.01–€59 000.00	€1 450	€725
More than €59 000.01*	€1 450	€725

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, Sport and Youth.

* For families with more than two dependent children, the maximum threshold is increased by €5.000 for each child beyond the second.

241. The Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training operate under the supervision of the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training. In April 2017, the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education accredited them as a Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training and classified their programmes at Level 5 of ISCED. Their objective is to provide students with the necessary qualifications by imparting academic and technical knowledge, as well as professional and practical skills. Additionally, they offer students the possibility to develop the skills that will enable them to adapt to the changing needs of the industry and the labour market. The Institutes are equally accessible to all and without discrimination and are free of charge. Eligible students can apply for a student grant. Prospective students must have a high school leaving certificate, while socio-economic selection criteria apply when the number of candidates surplus the number of available positions.

Answer to question 62 of the guidelines

242. Please refer to Previous Report paras. 186–187.

243. The Lifelong Learning Strategy (LLS) 2021–2027 has a strong focus on adult education and learning and its aim is to assist national and other bodies to enhance the participation of adults in education and training. It is implemented alongside other important national and European planning documents, programmes and policies, such as the National Reform Programme, the European Education Area 2025, the European Skills Agenda and the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the EU.

244. The National and the Technical Lifelong Learning Committees are responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the policies and actions carried out within the LLS. Lifelong learning programmes are currently being developed and offered by numerous public, semi-governmental and private institutions.

245. The Adult Education Centres mainly address the adult population of all ages and social backgrounds and provide general non-formal adult education in a lifelong learning perspective. Their main objective is the all-round development of individuals' personalities and the ability to function in communities, as well as to promote the realization of democracy in the Cypriot society. Other adult educational programmes are also offered with the responsibility for overseeing their provision falling under the authority of the existing Departments of the MOECSY.

246. The MOECSY also implements actions in the framework of the European Agenda for Adult Learning and the Electronic Platform for Adult Education in Europe, two important initiatives of the European Commission, in order to address current and future socioeconomic, demographic and technological challenges faced by EU citizens. In this respect, several activities are being implemented seeking to promote synergies among the major stakeholders activated in the field of adult education and enhance participation of adults in lifelong learning.

247. The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocation Education and Training promotes adult and continuing education through different programmes and actions. One of

the most important programme is the ‘Lifelong Vocational Education and Training Programme’ (Lifelong VET). As part of the Lifelong VET, three-year and one-year programmes are offered, while preparation courses for exams on technical subjects or the final examinations are also organised. Adults who successfully complete a three-year Lifelong VET programme obtain a leaving certificate, which is equivalent to the one provided by the morning Secondary Technical and Vocational Education. An important measure taken by the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocation Education, in order to upgrade and promote adults’ learning, is the provision of the Lifelong VET programme throughout Cyprus, both in urban and rural areas.

248. Another important action for promoting continuing education in a lifelong perspective is the ESTVE. The ESTVE offer a second chance to people who have not completed secondary education to re-enter the education system, acquire new skills and enrich their knowledge, abilities and qualifications. Therefore, it accepts citizens of all ages, who hold a leaving certificate from the gymnasium and wish to complete their studies in the STVE. As from 2019, ESTVE is updated and operates all over Cyprus, providing the opportunity to all citizens to acquire a leaving certificate, which is equivalent to that provided by the morning Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training.

Answer to question 63 of the guidelines

249. The term minority designates the following minority groups of citizens of the RoC, that is the Armenian, Maronite and Latin (Roman Catholic) religious groups composed of citizens of the RoC, who at the time of establishment of the Republic in 1960 opted in accordance with its Constitution to be part of the Greek Cypriot Community (Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Constitution) (hereinafter ‘the religious groups’). Children belonging to the religious groups can attend their respective minority schools. The operation of the Nareg Armenian Schools is fully funded by the MOECSY. The MOECSY is also contributing financially to the operation of the NANOR Armenian Children Centre. Moreover, the operation of Agios Maronas kindergarten and primary school, where a great majority of children belonging to the Maronite religious group are enrolled, are also fully funded by the MOECSY. Regarding the children belonging to the religious groups that choose to attend private schools, the MOECSY subsidizes their tuition fees. The subsidization is significantly higher for Maronite and Latin children attending Terra Santa College and St Mary’s School, the private schools that are particularly affiliated with these groups. Children belonging to the religious groups also attend public schools, where awareness of the historical presence of religious groups in Cyprus is promoted. Thus, the MOECSY ensures that all children belonging to the religious groups are able to preserve their language, identity and culture.

250. In accordance with Article 2 of the Constitution of Cyprus the Roma are considered as part of the Turkish Cypriot Community. In order to safeguard the right of education for all children, Cyprus has undertaken a series of different measures to facilitate Roma children schooling. Furthermore, children with a migrant background receive instruction of their native language. The School and Social Inclusion Actions programme, which is co-funded by the European Social Fund and the Government, offers to children afternoon, free of charge lessons in their first/mother language, since 2018.

Answer to question 64 of the guidelines

251. The MOECSY is focused on ensuring equal opportunities in education for both genders on a non-discriminatory basis at all levels of education. Towards this end, it has formed an Interdepartmental Committee with representatives from all its departments and services to oversee and coordinate all gender equality issues related to actions taken. The work of the Committee has resulted to the development of an AP, updated every three years, which promotes gender equality, targeting to the inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of the educational system and to the teacher in-service training.

252. Examples of the implementation of the AP are given in Attachment 14.

Answer to question 65 of the guidelines

253. The MOECSY is taking various measures to reduce drop-out rates, in particular of children from ethnic minorities and poorer households, as well as migrant and refugee children that are outlined in Attachment 15. Violence and aggressive behaviour deprive pupils of the right to equal access to all levels of education. Preventing school violence has always been a top priority for the MOECSY which continuously examines causes and effects of delinquent behaviour and identifies main strategies to combat the issue. Towards this goal, the School Violence Intervention Team was established, aiming to study and suggest measures against school violence. In accordance with its terms of service, the Team provides direct cooperation and support to school units to manage and deal with serious, recurrent incidents and/or phenomena of extreme deviant behaviour, exhibited by a pupil or group of pupils within the school premises. Thus, the main work of the Team is to provide immediate and effective assistance to the school. The Team has a holistic approach to inclusive education, based on strong co-operation between different stakeholders, and this includes pupils' learning as well as their well-being needs which are equally crucial.

254. For schools that participate in the 'School and Social Inclusion Actions' programme, clinical and counselling psychologists further support pupils with an increased risk of dropout. These pupils are initially identified by an Educational Psychologist, who is responsible for each school, who decides which pupils require more specialized and increased help and support. The Educational Psychology Service also contributes in raising awareness about different forms of substance abuse. Preventive intervention actions include raising awareness among pupils regarding decision making procedures, as well as strengthening pupils on peer pressure. The secondary intervention programme 'The circle of Friends' is an accredited prevention programme by the Cyprus Anti-Drug Council. The programme refers to high risk pupils, between the ages of 7–13.

255. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected pupils' economic, social and cultural rights. However, the MOECSY strived to address this issue, by providing substantial teacher training and pupil support. Particularly, the MOECSY in order to strengthen the protection of the most vulnerable pupils in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, took extra measures, as follows:

- During the school year 2019–2020, some children, many of whom were children with a migrant background, were supported through the co-funded programme 'Providing school breakfast to pupils attending public education'. However, due to the first lockdown, the children did not have access to breakfast. With the reopening of schools, families received cash compensation for the breakfasts they missed;
- During the school years 2019–2020 and 2020–2021, in many occasions, schools operated with distance education. Children with a migrant background were observed to have less access to lessons, due to lack of equipment. The MOECSY developed a special programme and provided schools with additional equipment, to cover the needs of the children who had limited access to the learning process, thus providing tablets and internet subscriptions to all pupils in need;
- Due to the lockdowns migrant children have missed several lessons for learning Greek as a second language. In order to allow them to catch up with their learning, the MOECSY offers Greek language lessons for migrants in the Public Summer Schools for the first time during the current summer. It is noted that Public Summer Schools are available to all children belonging to ethnic minorities, indigenous communities and poorer households, as well as migrant, refugee and internally displaced children free of charge;
- The Department of Primary Education has increased teaching periods for Greek as a second language in order to provide more hours for language and educational support in primary education for migrant children;
- School counsellors are in continuous communication with all pupils in secondary education, especially when pupils are attending online courses;

- In order for migrant children's families to have access to information for their safe return in face to face operation of schools, the MOECSY has translated the 'Parents' and Guardians' Guide for safe return to schools' in English, Arabic and Russian;
- Educational Psychologists are trained to respond to crisis within the school and community by the International School Psychology Association. As a result, all Educational Psychologists were involved in crisis intervention of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the closure of schools, compulsory quarantine, the change in children's daily lives and the reopening of schools following distance-keeping rules and health protocols, the role of Educational Psychology Service was significant. The Service focused primarily on managing the pandemic crisis and reducing and/or preventing any foreseen mental difficulties. Particular emphasis was given on the support and guidance of families and teachers in order to help children experience a healthy emotional state while adapting to the new reality by methods of social distancing. During the quarantine, the Service supported adolescents and children with online meetings, created psychoeducational material and published articles with various topics. With the end of the quarantine and the reopening of schools, the Service focused on supporting and mentoring teachers, parents and children through consultation meetings and interventions.

256. The Educational Psychology Service has also responded appropriately for supporting children and families who have lost their houses and properties as a result of the devastating fire in the mountainous areas of Lemesos and Larnaka. For the same reason, the MOECSY has decided to operate new Public Summer Schools for those areas as well as subsidize the purchase of children's essentials.

Article 14 of the Covenant

Answer to question 66 of the guidelines

257. Non-applicable.

Article 15 of the Covenant

Answer to question 67 of the guidelines

258. The Cultural Services' fundamental strategic goal is twofold: to support and promote artistic creativity by Cypriot artists locally, cultural groups and organisations locally and globally via collaborations and exchanges, as well as to ensure the access and participation in culture by all people. All institutional programmes and infrastructure of the Cultural Services is fully aligned with the core of cultural rights and the promotion of conditions that allow people to create works of art, present them, have access to them and enjoy freely and with no restrictions the cultural diversity of the island's culture.

259. The fulfillment of the aforementioned goals is carried out mainly by the subsidy programme CULTURE which is the biggest funding programme of the Cultural Services. It provides grants to individual artists, cultural institutions and cultural associations in order to develop activities and create art works in each and every artistic field (theatre, dance, literature, visual arts, music, cinema, traditional art), present them in Cyprus and/or abroad. Specific measures which are closely related to exercising cultural rights and guaranteeing access and participation to culture are the following:

- Cultural Decentralization Programme: The programme was launched in 2016. It was especially designed in order to provide habitants of rural areas access to theatre, dance, music performances and literary activities at their community. The programme takes cultural life out of the urban context and transfers it at a village square, school, patio, open air theatres;
- Intangible Cultural Heritage Programme: This programme is implemented in the framework of the subsidy programme CULTURE and provides grants to carry out activities which promote and safeguard elements included or to-be included in the

UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, thus preserving and developing local, traditional culture related to specific villages, communities and areas of the island.

260. Furthermore, in terms of infrastructure, the Cultural Services are responsible for the management of Kastelliottissa Medieval Hall. The Hall is given free of charge to artists, cultural groups and organisations to perform and present their artistic work.

261. (a) and (d) To ensure that access to cultural life is affordable for all segments of the population as well as to eliminate any kind of barrier preventing older and/or disabled persons to fully participate in cultural life, the following measures are taken in all state festivals organised or co-organised by the Cultural Services:

- Pupils, students, soldiers and retired persons have reduced entry fee;
- Disabled persons enter free of charge;
- Parents and the children they accompany pay reduced entry fee when the cultural activity addresses children;
- All cultural activities in the context of the Cultural Decentralization Programme are free of charge.

262. The new reality of confinement imposed by the pandemic resulted in an unprecedented pause of cultural creation and activities. Internet turned out to be a valuable ally in the efforts carried out by the Cultural Services to mobilize the artistic community and achieve a re-boost of cultural life after the first shock of the global confinement. The measure taken towards this direction was the provision of grants to artists, artistic groups and organisations to create and present theatre, dance, music performances, movies, lectures online in open channels and free of charge for the public.

263. The Committee of Health Education and Citizenship supports pupils through the ‘Grant of non-school-related actions to support pupils and pupils belonging to vulnerable population groups’, programme. More specifically, the programme promotes the development of actions taken by schools aiming in involving children in non-school activities, in order for pupils to make creative and joyful use of their free time. The actions aim in contributing to substantial support, in developing emotional, physical and mental empowerment and self-development, highlighting and cultivating talents and skills, developing a safe life etc. The programme aims to create more positive environments for pupils, in their out of school life, by offering the opportunity to participate in leisure activities of their choice and to highlight their talents. It also aims to prevent the potential risk of social exclusion and marginalization due to financial, socioeconomic or cultural barriers by creating the conditions for pupils belonging to vulnerable population groups to assert their fundamental right to develop themselves according to their potential. Each year the programme succeeds to fund afternoon activities for a considerable number of pupils between the ages of 5 to 18 years old. During 2019–2020 834 actions were funded, while, during 2020–2021 850 actions were funded. The feedback received from schools indicates that the programme achieves to alleviate financial, socioeconomic and cultural barriers, as well as promote children’s achievements and the joy they feel participating in activities of their free selection.

Answer to question 68 of the guidelines

264. The ‘Cultural Activities by Religious Groups’ programme was launched in 2019. It was especially designed in order to provide members of the religious groups of Cyprus, namely the Maronite, Armenian and Latin communities of the island the opportunity to create, produce and present artistic work of their own cultural identity in their language. Thus, the programme protects cultural diversity and promotes awareness of the cultural heritage and identity of the religious groups of the country. In addition, the translation programme of literature works in Greek language into Turkish and vice versa aims to enhance and promote respect for linguistic diversity. It is a subsidy programme for the publication of translations of literature works in Greek language into Turkish and literature works of Turkish Cypriot authors into Greek.

265. Please refer to Previous Report, paras. 209 and 211. Specific APs and/or activities:

(a) Ongoing research for the protection and revitalization of Cyprus Maronite Arabic (CMA) that runs by phases and is currently undergoing its 8th phase, in accordance with the AP implemented and the decisions of the relevant Committee of Experts. CMA is promoted and used in several school events in Agios Maronas kindergarten and primary school. CMA is also taught in the Annual Language Summer Camp in Kormakitis which is fully funded by the MOECSY. Moreover, the MOECSY subsidizes the production of teaching material for CMA and the training of Maronite teachers;

(b) The protection and promotion of the Armenian language is mainly safeguarded through the functioning of the Armenian Schools Nareg, which are fully subsidized by the MOECSY. The MOECSY is also funding the training of Armenian Teachers.

266. With regard to strengthening the teaching of CMA, the language continues to be taught in the following contexts:

(a) Lessons for children:

- (i) Afternoon lessons offered at Agios Maronas Primary School in the framework of the all-day school programme;
- (ii) Group lessons for advanced pupils age 9–12, every Sunday, from October to May are organised by the Office of the Representative, fully funded by the MOECSY;
- (iii) Group lessons for children re-established in Kormakitis with their families since 2019. The lessons are organised by the Office of the Representative and are taking place in Kormakitis once a week and are fully funded by the MOECSY;
- (iv) Summer intensive course for children aged 3–17 organised by the Office of the Representative and fully financed by the MOECSY held every August at Kormakitis;

(b) Lessons for adults:

- (i) Afternoon lessons in the framework of the Adult Education Centres, once a week from October to May yearly;
- (ii) Orthography classes for native speakers of CMA organised by the Office of the Representative, once a week, from October to May each yearly;
- (iii) Teachers' training takes place every summer at the University of Cyprus prior to the summer intensive course in order to prepare native speakers that have been selected to teach the language.

Answer to question 69 of the guidelines

267. Please refer to Previous Report para. 212.

268. The Visual Arts curriculum contributes to the overall human development, with an emphasis on the social, cognitive and emotional areas. At the same time, respect and understanding among human beings is fostered, as well as the development of positive attitudes towards the environment, society and culture. In this context, learning and teaching in the Visual Arts is experiential, and the design and delivery of visual arts activities focuses on viewing-observing and making-creating.

269. The Department of Primary Education implements Art and Museum Education Programmes in art galleries and museums, addressed to primary education pupils, in all districts of Cyprus. These educational programmes offer teachers the opportunity to develop creative and educational activities through structured theme units and rich supporting material. Moreover, it implements Music Education Programmes, where musical groups, vocal and instrumental, participate in different events such as concerts organised by schools, communities or other organisations. Due to the pandemic of COVID-19 and the restrictive measures, some of these programmes were suspended.

270. In Secondary General Education, the new school timetable, introduced in September 2015, includes a Fine Arts stream, which gives second and third grades of upper secondary education pupils the opportunity to attend four orientation courses. Pupils who are talented in music or sports have the opportunity to attend special relevant programmes (music or sports schools).

Answer to question 70 of the guidelines

271. Institutions of Higher Education are involved in research and work with members of local, national and international communities. All universities are funded by national programmes, as well by European and other international organizations, and are engaged in research synergies and student exchanges. The internal regulations of all Cyprus Institutions of Higher Education include provisions to ensure affordable access to the benefits of scientific progress and its applications for everyone, including disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. The Government ensures that there is no use of scientific and technical progress for purposes which are contrary to the enjoyment of human dignity and human rights.

Answer to question 71 of the guidelines

272. Please refer to Previous Report paras. 214–218.

Answer to question 72 of the guidelines

273. Please refer to Previous Report para. 219.

Answer to question 73 of the guidelines

274. Specific measures taken to support diffusion of culture and encourage international cultural contact are the following:

- Transit Programme: This programme aims to financially support artists working in the field of contemporary visual arts, in order to participate in Artists Residency Programmes abroad, thus encouraging their mobility;
- Presentation of Cypriot artist in the House of Cyprus in Athens: This measure aims to financially support Cypriot artists who wish to present their work in the House of Cyprus, the cultural foundation of the Embassy of Cyprus in Athens;
- National Representations in international cultural events: The Cultural Services financially support artists who participate in international events such as the Venice Biennale, the Kairo Biennale, the Venice Biennale of Architecture, amongst others.