



# Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community

Selected Stories

October 2018

# Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community

Selected Stories

October 2018

Cover image shows a participant taking part in the "Story of the EU" interactive storytelling event which took place at the EU Infopoint, Nicosia, in May 2015.

## FOREWORD

It is with distinct pleasure that I present this selection of stories reflecting the contribution that the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community has made since 2006. These stories demonstrate the wide range of EU support offered through the Programme. I am impressed by the sheer range of achievements that our collaboration has made possible.

The Aid Programme remains as relevant as ever. It seeks to develop and refurbish infrastructure, support economic development, foster reconciliation, build confidence and support civil society. The Programme also endeavours to bring the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU and help the community prepare for the implementation of EU law once a comprehensive settlement has been reached regarding the Cyprus issue.

The stories and testimonies of the different stakeholders at the heart of each article aim to highlight the concrete impact of the Aid Programme on farmers, local businesses and civil society organisations.

**Valdis Dombrovskis**

Vice-President of the European Commission

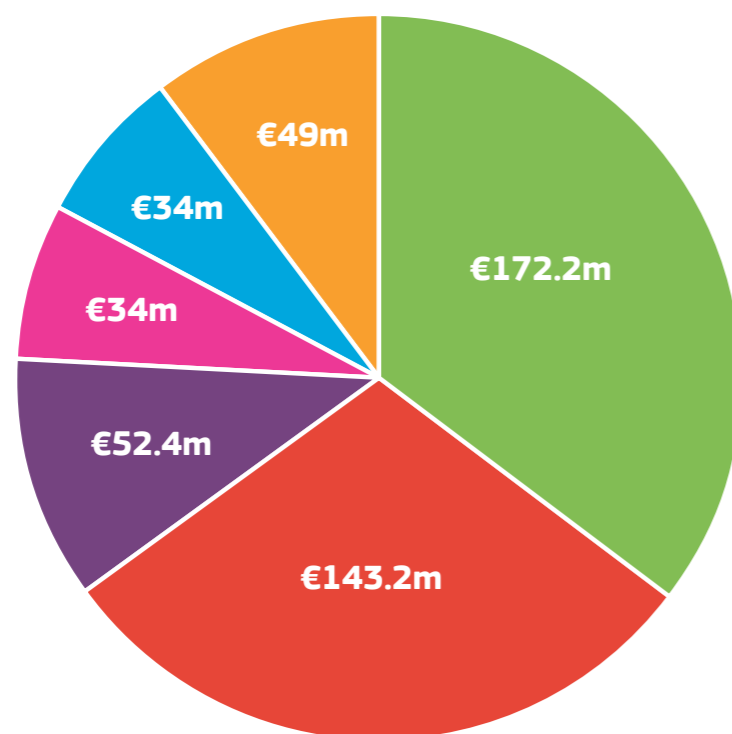


## INTRODUCTION

When Cyprus joined the EU, the Council of the European Union stated its intention to support the country's reunification by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community. Against this background, the Commission launched the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community in 2006, which is based on the Aid Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 389/2006) and endorsed by all EU Member States.

The programme is managed by the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service and supports projects in areas such as agriculture, environment, infrastructure, civil society, community development, cultural heritage, telecommunications and education, as well as private sector development, labour market, crossings, traffic safety, energy, providing information about EU policy and encouraging alignment to the EU acquis. This catalogue offers a more in-depth look at a selection of these projects revealing how the work of the Aid Programme is having a positive impact on the Turkish Cypriot community across the areas illustrated below.

Overview of funding 2006-2017  
(Total allocated: €484.8 million)



### Objective:

- Infrastructure
- Socio-economic development
- Confidence building
- Bringing Turkish Cypriots closer to the EU
- TAIEX Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
- Reserve (Support and Settlement facility)

## KEY SUCCESSES (2006-2018)

### Developing and restructuring infrastructure:

**263 km** of water supply distribution networks renewed

**3** waste water treatment plants constructed

**99 km** of sewage networks constructed

**7** refuse collection trucks supplied

**2** incinerators for animal by-products supplied

### Promoting social and economic development:

**271** rural development and local community development projects supported

**138** projects for schools, lifelong learning organisations and the labour market supported

**133** projects for SMEs and start-ups supported

Consultancy services and training provided for **more than 1 000** businesses and entrepreneurs

Training provided for **almost 200** farmers to improve water use efficiency and farm hygiene

**Over 800** farmers informed about disease-related risks, disease prevention and the long-term benefits of disease elimination among livestock

### Encouraging reconciliation, building confidence, supporting civil society and bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU:

**2** EU Infopoints established to proactively inform the Turkish Cypriot community, via events, social media, and web-based information activities, about EU policies and the Aid Programme.

**60** projects for civil society organisations supported

**More than 80** training sessions carried out to strengthen the work of civil society organisations

**885** missing persons identified and their remains returned to their families

**1 370** students given educational opportunities in other EU Member States through EU scholarships

**70** cultural heritage sites restored

**3** new Green Line crossing points opened

## FIRST EVER LARGE SCALE ANIMAL DISEASE TESTING IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY

The EU-funded animal diseases eradication programme was initiated to establish the status of important bovine, sheep and goat diseases in the Turkish Cypriot community, some of which are transmissible to humans. The programme also included measures to reduce disease prevalence (such as slaughter of positive animals, and placing movement restrictions on positive farms), leading to their progressive elimination. In the long term, the project's ultimate goal is to ensure the entire island is free from these diseases, according to the EU standards.

Better animal health means better public health, as both brucellosis and tuberculosis are transmissible to humans through contact with infected animals and eating contaminated foodstuffs. Both tuberculosis and brucellosis can cause severe illness in humans, but the programme aimed to prevent public health issues by eliminating these diseases in animals.

No organisation had attempted a project of this scale before in the Turkish Cypriot community – this was the first attempt to screen the region's population of domestic cattle, sheep and goats for contagious diseases. Farms with animals that tested positive for brucellosis had been found all over the Turkish Cypriot community, posing a risk for farmers all across Cyprus.



### Impact

- Closer alignment to EU standards
- Improved public health by elimination of animal diseases that are transmissible to humans
- Around 800 farmers made aware of project benefits for their businesses
- Improved capacity of veterinary services to deal with animal diseases
- Economic costs, and losses for farmers reduced by containing outbreaks

### Eradication of Animal Diseases – Phase 1

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €2.5 million

**Implementation period:** 2015-2017

Given the scale of the project, the implementation team had to introduce comprehensive sampling and testing procedures, data gathering and analysis as well as measures to deal with infected animals – including the slaughter of positive animals and movement restrictions on positive farms.

### Engaging local farmers

The implementation team needed the support of Turkish Cypriot farmers for the project to be successful.

First, local farmers had to be educated on the risks of allowing infected animals to remain in a herd. One of the farmers supporting the project was Ahmet Yeşilada. Ahmet's farm has over 1 000 cattle and 1 500 sheep, and employs 18 people.

"When farmers see that 50 out of 100 animals have tested positive and need to be slaughtered, they know this will have a huge impact on their business," said Ahmet. "However, leaving positive animals on a farm raises the risk of exposing the remaining animals to the pathogen – increasing the probability of healthy animals becoming infected, which sometimes leads to the elimination of the entire herd."

### Phase 1 screening

The screening took place in under a year, between October 2016 and May 2017, just over 380 000 animals were sampled and tested in the laboratory for brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis, and leucosis. To implement a project of this scale, the team needed additional resources and began working with private veterinary services to help with sampling.

"The primary production on our farm is milk. We are aiming at developing production in compliance with EU standards with a modern structure and technological support," said Ahmet. He was in support of the project from the beginning, supporting testing of the animals and raising awareness in the farming community.

Once the farming community realised the dangers of allowing the infection to spread by not slaughtering positive animals, the team developed a timely, fair, and consistent compensation system for the slaughter of infected livestock. The tool was created in the best interests of local farmers, and ensured their support for the project.

The project carried out intensive hands-on training for veterinarians and laboratory personnel – strengthening the capacities and performance on a local level. Ahmet describes it as developing "the structure of veterinary services, the capacity and the thinking processes."

The team established both a standardised procedure and created a database of farm and animal identification, animal movement data, vaccination/health records, as well as laboratory test results.



Farmers take part in practical training sessions on preventing the spread of diseases



#### Testing for brucellosis, tuberculosis and leucosis

Working in conjunction with the local veterinary services, the team completed the first phase of the project—testing just over 380 000 animals on 4 480 farms - with the following results:

- More than 10% of both cattle and sheep and goat farms tested positive for brucellosis. These farms are located all across the Turkish Cypriot community, presenting a high risk for susceptible animals and humans.
- Only 0.4% of cattle farms tested positive for tuberculosis and none tested positive for leucosis, indicating that the objective of recognition of freedom from these diseases, according to EU standards, is achievable at minimum cost/time.

Whenever an infected animal was discovered, animal movements were restricted within infected farms, infected animals were slaughtered and other animals within the infected holdings were retested to ensure containment of the disease.

Throughout this process the team maintained communication with stakeholders to ensure public awareness. Frequent meetings were held with farmers, with around 800 farmers participating. Local farmers responded well: "When they saw the success and the results of the project, they became more positive. The farmers feel that they also own the results," said Ahmet.

"We should know the health status of the farm when we buy a product from it. All products should be traceable and information from each and every one of them should be shared in a transparent way. Consumers should know the origin of animal products and should be able to question it," Ahmet said.

By the completion of the first phase of the project in November 2017, the infected animals were slaughtered to prevent the spread of brucellosis – a step towards eliminating brucellosis from the island.



#### Impact on the sector

- **Improved quality of veterinary services.** By involving private veterinarians in the project, the wider role of veterinary services in the farming community changed from service providers to controllers. Private veterinarians will continue to be involved in the second phase of the project.
- **Better prepared for other animal disease outbreaks.** By establishing documented procedures, local services are now better equipped to handle other animal disease outbreaks.

#### Objectives for Phase 2: 2018/2019

The second phase of the project will build on the success of the first screening – still raising the standards in the interest of animal and public health. Phase 1 was a significant first step in reducing the prevalence of brucellosis, but its elimination can take many years.

## CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE ROAD

The EU-funded Civic Space project aims to strengthen capacity and actions of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), promote their role in society, increase collaboration between them and partnerships with EU CSOs. A key part of the project is the annual Open Door Festival, where Civic Space takes to the road.

The 2nd Open Door Festival took place across four Saturdays in October 2017. The aim of the Open Door Festival is to promote the CSOs, encourage volunteering and create partnerships among the CSOs, island-wide. This month-long initiative showcases the important work being carried out by civil society in Cyprus. Packed full of exciting and informative events, CSO fairs, workshops, film screenings, exhibitions, and much more, the Open Door Festival encourages members of the public to come and discover the world of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Taking with them their promotional bus, the 2017 festival began in Nicosia before moving to Lefka/Lefke, Famagusta and Galateia/Mehmetçik. For this second edition of the festival, the CSOs part of the organisation committee decided to be “on the road” carrying their activities outside their home town in order to strengthen relations and partnership with CSOs from other cities.

The Open Door Festival included activities such as the ‘living library’. Under this unique concept, every CSO had a desk and they acted like a living book. Readers came and sat with them for 15-20 minutes and asked questions about the organisation. In total there were 32 desks with 60 people and 180 ‘books’ were read.

This was the second year of the festival and the team took on board lessons learned from the first edition.

For the 2017 festival, Civic Space engaged with local communities, rural CSOs, youth communities and groups.



### Impact

- CSO capacity strengthened
- Strengthened links with EU CSOs
- Promotes reconciliation by supporting bi-communal actions
- Hundreds of people reached to raise awareness of CSOs and their work through events such as the Open Door Festivals

### Civic Space

**EU Contribution:**  
€2.8 million

**Implementation period:** 2015-2020

This helped to ensure better outreach using tools like billboards, newspapers, media, social media, videos, posters and leaflets.

The on the road approach appealed to CSOs in the Turkish Cypriot community. The event created the opportunity for outreach and also potential partnerships. It allowed people to communicate face-to-face, and exchange contacts as well as experiences.



Posters were used to publicise the events, which took place in different locations across the Turkish Cypriot community



Members of PeacePlayers International, a bi-communal youth sports organisation, play a game at the Open Door Festival.

## BOTTLING HAPPINESS: HOW ONE NEW MACHINE TRANSFORMED A BUSINESS

Cypri Cola is one of the biggest bottled water factories in the Turkish Cypriot community, employing around 180 people. Through the purchase of new machinery that can both produce and fill the bottle, profits have increased – and the business has recently signed a deal with Coca-Cola.

Cypri Cola, founded in the early 90s, was the first producer of bottled water in the Turkish Cypriot community, and quickly grew into one of the largest. By 2014, however, as the company grew and received higher demand, the system was becoming too inefficient to cope and staff were having to work overtime to keep up with orders.

Cypri Cola's Director, Dr Ahmet Gürtuna, says, "We had to start to work on Saturday for 16 hours and in the summer, Sunday as well because we couldn't cope with the demand [...] it wasn't a pleasant situation."

So the company applied for a grant from the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, and began researching the latest blow-moulding machinery.

Cypri Cola received around €600 000, to which they added their own investment, and purchased a Krones PET-blowing machine, which can make new bottles and fill them within seconds. It has more than tripled the company's production capacity of non-alcoholic drinks, from 5 000 to 18 000 bottles per hour.

But time isn't the only thing the machinery is saving. Bottles used to have to be sent to a different part of the factory to be filled – which meant a risk of contamination. Dr Gürtuna explains. "Before, we were carrying the bottle by air commerce [like a pneumatic



### Impact

- Increased capacity of the factory, leading to better processes
- A more modern factory, which in turn helped to establish a contract with Coca Cola
- Increased capacity and process awareness even further through interaction with a major multinational

### A more energy efficient Cypri Cola

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €600 000

**Implementation period:** 2014-2016

tube]. We had to use a rinser to rinse the bottle with water. This water, you'd throw it away but with this new technology [...] you're saving water."

After modernising the production line, Cypri Cola decided to modernise their whole facility, which has led to a new contract with drinks giant Coca Cola.

But for Dr Gürtuna, the biggest improvements have been to the wellbeing of his workforce. "This is, for me, the most important thing," he says, "because when employees come to work, they are happy, and when they go home they are happy."

## STORAGE AND SOLAR POWER: NEW SYSTEMS INCREASE PROFITS FOR FAMILY FARM

The new equipment at Türkay's family farm has been the envy of his neighbours. Not only has he been able to improve marketing of his produce by storing harvested crops in the cold storage unit until the price is right, he's also implemented a solar-powered irrigation system. With a higher volume of produce and lower running costs, the farm's profits have increased.

Like many farms in the Turkish Cypriot community, the Hocanın family farm grows classic Cypriot produce, such as potatoes, onions and pomegranates with irrigation being an important aspect of the farming practise.

Now, thanks to a grant of approximately €98 000 from the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, father and son Necati and Türkay have been able to purchase a solar energy system, an irrigation pump, irrigation pipelines and a cold storage unit for the farm... and they're already seeing the benefits.

In the three months since the new energy-efficient systems were installed, water usage has already gone down by almost a third. Fuel costs have decreased by 60% as the solar system reached its full performance – which, in turn, is increasing the farm's profitability.

What's more, the cold storage unit has revolutionised their way of working.



### Impact

- Energy costs reduced by 60%
- Profitability increased by 60%
- Reduced greenhouse emissions by 35 tonnes per year

### Increase of Competitiveness Through Environmentally Friendly Production

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €98 000

**Implementation period:** 2015-2016

Now, sales can be sustained throughout the year, as Türkay explains: "[We] pick the produce, and sell it when the prices are better. From the harvest time, until the time [we] sold the product, the prices rose twice [...] it's more profitable to keep produce in the cold room and then sell when the market's more favourable".

"It's really improved our relationship with the traders [...] We are very happy."



## AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME WITH A DIFFERENCE: TRAINING FOR RESULTS

Hasan Akanay used to have a hard time finding reliable apprentices for his auto repair business, Akanay Garaj. Now, thanks to a programme that trains apprentices and matches them with businesses, he has two committed trainees.

Akanay Garaj is one of many businesses that have benefited from the “Training for Results” programme, developed with help from the European Union’s Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community.

The funding allowed the trainers to study similar programmes abroad, and to purchase vital equipment, including a vehicle for monitoring visits to workplaces. The result is a flexible training programme covering six sectors (hairdressing, barbering, car mechanics, electrics, plumbing and cookery). Students can earn a wage as they learn, and employers gain fully-trained, reliable employees.

Hasan Akanay puts the success down to the communication between workplaces, schools and families that the project encourages. To illustrate, he tells us about one of his students.

“Before he came here, the mother was telling [me] he’s not reliable, he goes to work for a day and then three days he’s absent. [Two months] after he started to work here through the programme, the mother called and said, ‘Thank you very much because my son is now very motivated to come to work.’”



### Impact

- Apprentices effectively matched with local businesses
- 325 young apprentices aged 15-18 and 75 adults have completed their training in the past 5 years
- Continuous improvement of the training programme, resulting in an increased enrolment with currently 400 apprentices in 29 sectors and 165 adults in about 20 sectors

### Project: Training for Results

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €170 000

**Implementation period:** 2016-2017

According to Hasan, the benefit of sourcing apprentices through the programme is very clear. “Now I’m teaching them,” he says, “but in two years’ time I know they will be my employees.”

## BUILDING A PROFESSION: THE TURKISH CYPRIOT CHAMBER OF ARCHITECTS

For all architects, staying up to date with the latest techniques, laws and regulations is a vital part of the profession. When the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Architects established a Continuing Professional Development programme and qualification system for architects, they found it didn’t just benefit their members and students – it helped the Chamber build better relationships too.

Thanks to funding from the European Union’s Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, the Chamber has developed 25 training courses which will keep architects up to date with building regulations, and eventually offer accreditation for architectural graduates.

The team used the grant to make study visits to professional architecture institutes in the UK and Italy, and to develop a series of courses. Topics are based on international principles, but adapted for local issues such as the preservation of cultural heritage.

By October 2017, 215 practicing architects had started or completed new courses as part of the programme. The Chamber hopes that adopting EU standards and best practices will make the architecture and related sectors in the Turkish Cypriot community more competitive.

The development of the new programme has helped the Chamber to build a rapport with its members too – as the team explain: “Young people, mostly, they were looking to our Chamber for authoritative advice.



### Impact

- Increased competitiveness of the architecture sector in the Turkish Cypriot community
- Alignment to EU standards and best practices by developing a suite of 25 training courses
- 215 participants had taken the courses by October 2017

### Project: Establishing a Continuing Professional Development Programme and Qualification System for Architects

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €113 000

**Implementation period:** 2016-2017

But now they understand that the Chamber of Architects is something more than that. They come here, they can share their problems with us. So this also gives us good feedback; [...] we take their opinions [of the programme], what they think about it. And so for the next year, we are sure we are going to do better.”

## USING HISTORY TO REWRITE THE FUTURE

Since 1981, the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) has been working to recover, identify and return to families the remains of those who went missing during the tragic events of 1963-64 and 1974.

The CMP is the oldest capacity-building project in Cyprus. With a humanitarian mandate of finding missing persons, the project is working through the identification of remains through an archaeological phase, anthropological phase, genetic phase (lab testing DNA samples), and ultimately returning the remains to the family. It aims to give closure to over 2 000 families, and in the process, rebuild the trust between communities.

### Closure

The CMP comprises three members, Mr. Nestoras Nestoros and Ms. Gülden Plümer Küçük, appointed respectively by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, and third Member Mr. Paul-Henri Arni, appointed by the United Nations. Along with its bi-communal team of archaeologists, anthropologists and geneticists, what the CMP hopes to achieve is closure on the violence of the past.

The CMP's mandate is not about finding out what happened, or placing blame – its primary objective is to provide closure for families. To fully heal the wounds of the past, the CMP focuses on the impact the work is having on both communities: “We are giving them opportunity to have closure for their agony and understand the other side ... Turkish Cypriot people were taught that it only happened to them and Greek Cypriot people were taught that it only happened to them – now they understand the true cost of the conflict”, says Ms. Küçük.

If the CMP is able to give some closure to the deaths of loved ones, there is less suspicion and fewer reasons to be captivated by impossible questions about the past. As the CMP Members say, the violence of the past “leaves a scar, once the person is buried, in dignity, it closes the wound. It leaves a scar that will always stay there, but the wound is closed for good.”



The bi-communal team examines recorded remains at the CMP laboratory  
© UNDP Photos/ Nick Danziger.

### Impact

- Bringing the communities closer
- World-renowned work with a bi-communal team working together to identify and return remains to families
- By June 2018, out of the 2 002 total missing persons, 1 218 sets of remains exhumed, out of which 885 genetically identified and returned to their families

### Committee on Missing Persons

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €23 million

**Implementation period:** 2006-present



*To restore the trust is extremely difficult. Trust is a bit like a crystal glass and when it breaks, it breaks into small pieces.*



Paul-Henri Arni, CMP Third Member



© UNDP Photos/ Nick Danziger

### Four-stage process

The CMP researchers go through a four-stage process in their work, which begins with archaeological research. Once investigators have located potential burial sites, the bi-communal teams work across Cyprus to conduct delicate exhumations. During the anthropological analysis, forensic scientists at the dedicated CMP laboratory examine the remains to identify individual characteristics, and combine these details with analysis of clothes or other belongings found with the remains.

This work is followed up with genetic analysis and bone profiling as part of the genetic phase of research. The results of the genetic testing is compared with a database of families with a missing relative.

### Next steps

In the years ahead, because of the time that has elapsed, the CMP will need to record the testimony of witnesses and secure better access to archive material. The gathering of information from so many different sources is one of the main undertakings of the CMP and will be complex, with the search taking them to the archives of the Red Cross and UN in New York, London, Geneva and Canada. Investment in technology has formed a fundamental part of the future strategy, and as well as a new database, funding has also helped to buy new equipment for the laboratory.

The CMP is also incorporating cutting-edge genetics testing techniques and has invested in improved DNA record cataloguing equipment, says Mr. Nestoros. “Because there are many pending cases, we can now look through all the DNA and we are able to look for more relatives using more DNA samples. We are planning to use a different method.”



A member of the CMP team speaks with a witness  
© UNDP Photos/ Nick Danziger.

If there is a verified match of 99.95%, the results are confirmed. The CMP Members say that the high threshold eliminates risk of misidentification: “That’s why the process is very painful, very slow and very costly: it has to be 99.95% certain when we identify someone.”

Once the identity is verified by the CMP, the family is contacted by the respective Cypriot member of the Committee. Families are able to view the remains and meet with the scientists involved with the identification. The remains are returned to the families, who are offered psycho-social support and a contribution to funeral costs.

Now, after ten years of fieldwork and its commitment to innovative methods, the team has identified 55% of the remains, and the work has become world-renowned. The success of the project has even attracted the attention of world-leading anthropologists, with a chapter of the upcoming specialist book *Humanitarian Forensic Science Interacting with the Dead and the Living* dedicated to the work of the CMP.

Though it has many short-term goals in terms of improving its archives and investigation techniques, the committee members are clear that the end goal is answers for the Cypriot people. “There’s an impact, digit-by-digit, person-by-person, which is not very visible because it takes place in the silence of the families,” says Mr. Arni.

With the process of repairing the wounds of the past, the CMP hopes that with it, comes the chance of reconciliation. “For the first time,” say the Members, “they are learning to understand each other.”

## A CITY UNITED: HOW A WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT IS BRINGING NICOSIA TOGETHER

Nicosia is home to thriving Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. When the impact of an old and overloaded wastewater treatment plant began to take its toll across the city, representatives from both communities came together to find a solution.

The Nicosia Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) is a state-of-the-art facility. Constructed from 2010-2014, the WWTP is currently treating 30 000m<sup>3</sup> of wastewater a day. The resulting high quality water can be used for irrigation, while the process also produces bio-solids for fertilisation and green electricity.

Before 2010, it was a different story. Nicosia's almost 40-year-old sewage system was struggling to cope with the demands of a larger, more modern city. "The technology that was used at the plant was outdated," Savvas Hadjineocleous, from the Nicosia Sewerage Board explains, "and we had a lot of environmental problems that were affecting the quality of the lives of the people in both communities."

Savvas and his counterparts from the Turkish Cypriot community recognised that this was a city-wide issue. "The sewage networks of Nicosia have covered the whole city since 1979," Faik Özkaynak, a Turkish Cypriot representative shares. "If there's a problem in one part of the city, it's going to affect the other part[...] The city is one city."

This collaborative mindset led to a joint project between the communities. The EU played a key role by providing 30% of the project's funds, with 70% coming from the Sewerage Board of Nicosia.



### Impact

- Health hazards for people in the Turkish Cypriot community avoided
- Asbestos material water pipes replaced
- New controlled sewerage network installed up to EU standards, reducing waste dumping
- 30 000m<sup>3</sup> of wastewater is treated daily
- Better protection for the environment
- Approximately 270 000 Cypriots benefit from the Nicosia treatment plant

### Nicosia Waste Water treatment plant

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €8.2 million

**Implementation period:** 2010-2014

The United Nations Development Programme also offered a guiding hand through implementation. "The financial support the Turkish Cypriot community received from the European Union was something that made this project possible," Savvas says.

While the WWTP has been operational for three years, the project's journey – and the collaboration between Nicosia's two communities – is far from over.

"We are working with the Turkish Cypriot community and supporting two projects that are underway including the northern Nicosia trunk sewer, which will be constructed from Nicosia to the treatment plant," Savvas explains.

"The plant was constructed to treat 30 000m<sup>3</sup> in the first phase. We are almost receiving this flow at the moment," Faik adds. "This may not be sufficient in the future, so we will work together to increase [the plant's] capacity."

### Environment, economy and health: the benefits of treating wastewater

Like Nicosia, the towns of Morphou/Güzelyurt and Famagusta shared common problems: these two locations lacked fully functional sewer networks and wastewater plants and had outdated drinking water networks. The answer came in the form of EU-funded projects providing EU-standard wastewater treatment plants and new sewerage and drinking water networks.

Doğuş Veysioglu, one of the members of the local community supervising the waste water treatment plant in Famagusta, describes the situation in the town before the project began. "Before the plant and before the network, people were extracting sewage from the septic tanks, which is basically an enclosed tank that collects all the sewage from the household and discharges it [into disposal sites]."

The EU was closely involved in the funding and implementation of the project, working alongside local teams and contractors. "I feel positive about the EU and their investment," Atila Aypar, another local community member says about the experience.

Since the plants were constructed, environmental, economic and health benefits have been felt in both Morphou/Güzelyurt and Famagusta. "The environment is protected," Doğuş says. "That's the success and that was the aim, because sewage was discharged into disposal sites. It was uncontrolled. It was flowing free on the land. Now it's treated. It flows to a more defined, controlled area. It can be reused."

## ADDRESSING THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: THE "UNSPOKEN" PROJECT

In the Turkish Cypriot community, the acknowledgement of LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) persons and their rights is still something of a taboo subject. But, an awareness campaign called "Unspoken" is really getting people talking.

For many people in the Turkish Cypriot community, the subject of LGBTI rights is "the elephant in the room". That's why the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC), in collaboration with the Queer Cyprus Association and the Thomson Foundation, created Unspoken, an EU-funded project - with an elephant campaign logo - aiming at improving levels of media coverage and public debate around the subject.

The decriminalisation of homosexuality in Cyprus was only fully implemented in the Greek Cypriot community about 15 years ago. In the Turkish Cypriot community, an amendment to the legal text was made in 2014 to decriminalise same-sex sexual activity, following seven years of work by the Queer Cyprus Association (originally "Initiative Against Homophobia").

As Hazal Yorga from the Queer Cyprus Association explains, any kind of social change is a 'tough sell' in Cyprus, due to the country's recent political history. "Cypriots have been accustomed to live with the 'Cyprus problem' overshadowing every other problem, especially social issues," she says. "It was never 'the time' for human rights, as they were perceived as simple issues not worth spending time or effort on, compared to the biggest problem of all."



Billboard campaign to encourage discussion around LGBTI rights

### Impact

- A highly visible behavioural change campaign that sparked discussion in the Turkish Cypriot community
- 3 billboard campaigns and 2 public service announcements delivered
- Training delivered to multipliers to change attitudes

### Unspoken: Creating Dialogue on LGBTI Rights in the Turkish Cypriot Community

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €300 000

**Implementation period:** 2015-2017



### Impact

Funding from the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community enabled the Queer Cyprus Association, together with media organisations CCMC and the Thomson Foundation, to research and develop the Unspoken project. As well as working closely with the media to improve the levels and the quality of coverage, and improve representation of LGBTI persons in the media, the Unspoken team created a series of tailor-made seminars for professionals, and a wide-reaching media campaign that included TV and billboard ads.

To improve media coverage, Unspoken monitored four media outlets over two years, and conducted a series of workshops with journalists. This led directly to the

### Reaction

Although the seminars have been gradually raising awareness, the TV ads and billboards have had a more immediate impact - not all of it positive.

Two public service announcements aired on three TV channels, and there were three rounds of billboard campaigns across the whole of the Turkish Cypriot community.

Each of the campaigns were carefully designed to prompt discussion, rather than to shock. "We didn't necessarily want [the first billboard poster] to be provocative or offensive - which it isn't, it just says, 'I'm gay,' which is a pretty standard sentence if you think about it," explains Hazal.

production of an LGBTI media toolkit, which has been well-received. The toolkit contains useful tips like how to cover story ideas, and the right terminology to use.

The Unspoken project seminars target sectors such as media, education, law and health, to share information and start discussions with professionals. To do this, Hazal explains, each seminar has been tailored for its attendees, which include journalists and teachers.

The idea is to raise awareness with a range of influential people, and create a multiplier effect that has the potential to open up discussion across the whole community.

But the reaction was instantaneous. "Some of them were vandalised immediately [...] Some of them were taken down immediately, some of them were ripped."

Whilst this was a surprise and, in many ways, depressing for the team, it sparked huge media coverage and conversation across Cyprus. Now, the team can see the positive side. "I think it turned out for the best. [...] a lot of people were sharing, on social media and in their columns in the newspaper how great the engagement was, and if some people are reacting badly, so be it.

We're talking about it now, aren't we?"

## SCHOLARSHIPS OFFER MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

One way of bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU is to make it much easier for people to study and learn abroad. That's why the European Union's Scholarship Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community was set up, more than a decade ago.

Each year, more than 100 Turkish Cypriots attend undergraduate or postgraduate courses, short term courses or internships in other EU Member States, through the EU Scholarship Programme, offering a wide range of opportunities.

"I really feel so lucky that I found this chance," says Ahmet Akarsu, who received a scholarship to study in the UK in 2017. "I believe that I have improved myself not only in my field [computer engineering], but also in many other aspects including my English proficiency, communication, problem-solving and organisation skills. This was certainly a great experience and a milestone in my life."

As well as spreading the word through seminars and media advertisements, the EU Scholarship Programme has a 'Study in Europe Day' where universities from EU Member States come to promote their courses. And this year, language courses have been opened up for new types of applicants.

Indeed, the Programme brings many benefits to Turkish Cypriots. As another beneficiary points out: "I really enjoyed the time [abroad] and I would like to mention that studying in European countries gives confidence and you gain a lot of experience..."

Previous alumni are encouraged to stay in touch and are invited to share their success at events. The presence of an active alumni network doesn't just help others who might be thinking of applying, it also showcases the diverse range of opportunities on offer and the positive impact that the EU Scholarship Programme is having on the lives of Turkish Cypriots.



A Turkish Cypriot student learns about study opportunities in Sweden on Europe Day  
© Copyright British Council.

### Impact

- More than 100 scholarships are issued each year
- Turkish Cypriot students, teachers and other professionals can spend up to a year at a university in another EU Member State, including in the Republic of Cyprus
- Diverse opportunities are extended to students and professionals who might not otherwise be able to finance their studies in other EU Member States
- Scholarships have been given to more than 1 300 students and professionals since 2007
- Growing interest with around 450 applications received in 2016 to more than 650 in 2018

### European Union Scholarship Programme

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €16 million

**Implementation period:** 2007-present

## NOT JUST PRESERVING BUT IMPROVING

When Hakan Arsal's father started pickling vegetables at home in 1979, he probably didn't predict quite how well it would turn out. Now his son runs the thriving Arsal Gida factory, whose latest equipment purchase has allowed them to increase production, capacity, hygiene and efficiency - and meet EU standards.

The Arsal Gida factory purchases and processes local produce to make pickles, jams and other traditional Cypriot products. But high production costs, a limited production capacity, and manual production methods were all making it more difficult for the company to remain competitive.

Now, thanks to funding from the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, Hakan has been able to purchase and install a range of new equipment. Four new machines have modernised and automated the production processes, increasing food hygiene standards and improving overall quality and efficiency. Capacity has increased by more than 30%.

The new slicing and dicing machine has allowed the company to increase its product range, whilst continuing to make the traditional pickles so important to the business. Hakan explained, "[traditional vegetables] are gathered from the mountains by really low-income earning families, so [...] it's really important that we keep producing these specific pickles because it's an important source of income for them."



© Arsal Gida Sanayi

### Impact

- Factory capacity increased by more than 30%
- More hygienic production processes
- Production up to EU standards

### Arsal Gida

**EU Contribution:**  
Approximately €95 000

**Implementation period:** 2014-2016

The filled jar washing machine has not only increased efficiency, by automating a previously manual process, but it's significantly improved hygiene levels. Importantly, this means the company can now make products that meet EU standards.

Hakan is thrilled with the improvements the EU funding has allowed him to make. He said, "Without the grants, we were going to be able to come to this position in five years but with the grants, we made it in half [the] time."

## THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL HERITAGE: REBUILDING MONUMENTS, BUILDING COMMUNITIES

In October 2017, the EU-funded Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH) unveiled their latest major conservation effort – the restoration of the Archangelos Michael Church, a historic church located in the village of Lefkoniko/Geçitkale. The restoration is the latest conservation work in nearly a decade of bi-communal conservation projects led by the TCCH.

The purpose of the project was to restore the church to its original state. After one year of restoration work, the church benefited from major structural consolidation – a repaired dome and belfry and a restored roof. The interior also underwent major restoration: a painting of Archangel Michael, to whom the church is devoted, now covers the whole wall of the blind arch, and the team discovered an older fresco which was repaired and restored and is now visible to the public behind glass. The project was fully funded by the European Union.

The TCCH marked the completion of the restoration with a bi-communal opening ceremony – members and leaders of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities came together at the church to celebrate the completion of the conservation project, and honour the joint work and mutual trust this joint project represents.



Archangelos Michael Church  
© UNDP Photos/ Kerim Belet

### Impact

- Cultural heritage preserved through a visible island-wide bi-communal project
- 55 cultural heritage sites protected, with a further 15 ongoing projects
- Enhanced trust and cooperation between both communities

### Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage

#### EU Contribution:

Approximately €14.7 million

**Implementation period:** 2008-present



*With the support of the European Union and our friends, we open the way.*

Ali Tuncay



### Bi-communal leadership

Two important members of the TCCH are the co-chairmen, Ali Tuncay, and Takis Hadjidemetriou. “This case was unique,” said Takis, “The request for us to begin the conservation work came from both sides, not just the Greek Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriots living in the area applied to us to repair the church.”

Beyond the immediate practical needs of conservation, the deeper goal of the TCCH is to promote cultural understanding and unity between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

Before works on the church began, the TCCH, alongside the European Union and UNDP, invited local stakeholders to a series of talks and meetings about the forthcoming works, engaging the local community on both sides and gaining their support. Ali acknowledges the work to be done to build the trust in Cyprus, “A lot of people suffered, be it a Greek Cypriot or a Turkish Cypriot, we suffered a lot. We left our villages or towns, we lost our loved ones. If we respect each other, if we cooperate on an equal basis without dominating each other I think we can achieve a lot for the benefit of the two communities living on this island.”



Archangelos Michael Church  
© UNDP Photos/ Kerim Belet

### “Like Father and Son”

Takis and Ali are the driving force behind the TCCH, their close bond has helped to establish an environment of trust around the project. The two have been working together for nearly ten years, since the formation of the TCCH in 2008. In that time, their working relationship has blossomed into real friendship. “We are like, I want to say this, father and son,” said Ali.

Takis believes their friendship is representative of the TCCH's bi-communal approach, “We meet as one body, not as Greek and Turkish Cypriots. We speak freely, we speak sincerely, and we face problems as common problems.”

The two leaders of the TCCH have a clear mandate: “the recognition, promotion, and protection of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the island of Cyprus”. They lead dozens of conservation projects across Cyprus,

joined by an advisory board of archaeologists, architects, art historians, and town planners from both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. In 2016, the value of their work was recognised when the two men received from the European Parliament the European Citizen Award for their bi-communal cooperation and promotion of mutual understanding in Cyprus.

In the decade following its creation, the TCCH has undertaken conservation work at culturally symbolic and historically significant sites across Cyprus – including Othello's Tower in Famagusta, the Apostolos Andreas Monastery in the Karpasia/Karpaz peninsula, and the Evretou/Evretu Mosque. This work has been viewed domestically and internationally as a step forward for trust and collaboration between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

**Disclaimer:**

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Contractor (Ecorys) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Funded by  
the European Union

