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Commission



Directorate-General for
STRUCTURAL REFORM SUPPORT
Cyprus settlement support



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CYPRUS SETTLEMENT SUPPORT

The European Commission's Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) coordinates the Commission's support for **talks under the auspices of the United Nations** (UN) on a settlement of the Cyprus problem based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality.



HOW IT WORKS

The Commission supports the efforts by the **leaders of the Cypriot communities** as well as the UN towards an early resumption of these talks. The Commission in particular provides advice to the different parties with a view to ensuring that any solution is fully compatible with the EU body of laws (the EU acquis). While settlement talks remain suspended, the Commission continues its support for **confidence-building** measures between the two communities, such as the recent breakthrough on mobile telephone roaming.

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

DG REFORM is responsible for the implementation of the EU **Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community** and for monitoring the application of the **Green Line Regulation** ⁽¹⁾.

DG REFORM runs the EU Programme Support Office in the northern part of Nicosia to act as a point of contact with the beneficiary community and to help implement the assistance.

From 2006 to 2019, the EU allocated **EUR 555 million** to projects in support of the Turkish Cypriot community. The Aid Programme aims to facilitate the **reunification of Cyprus** by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community. The programme supports projects in areas such as agriculture, the environment, infrastructure, civil society, community development, cultural heritage, telecommunications and education, as well as private sector development, labour market, traffic safety and energy, providing information about EU policy and encouraging alignment with the EU.

⁽¹⁾ [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 866/2004, OJ L 161, 30.4.2004, pp. 128-143.](#)

TABLE OF CONTENT

- 3** Development and restructuring of infrastructure
- 4** Social and economic development
- 5** Reconciliation, confidence-building measures and support to civil society
- 6** Bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the European Union
- 7** Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
- 8** Green Line Regulation
- 9** Contact details

DEVELOPMENT AND RESTRUCTURING OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Through the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, the EU has set a specific objective to **develop and strengthen infrastructure**. The programme has funded projects in many important areas, including water, solid waste, air quality, nature protection and energy. Key achievements so far include the construction of three new wastewater treatment plants, a new sanitary landfill and a new air quality monitoring network.

CASE STUDY

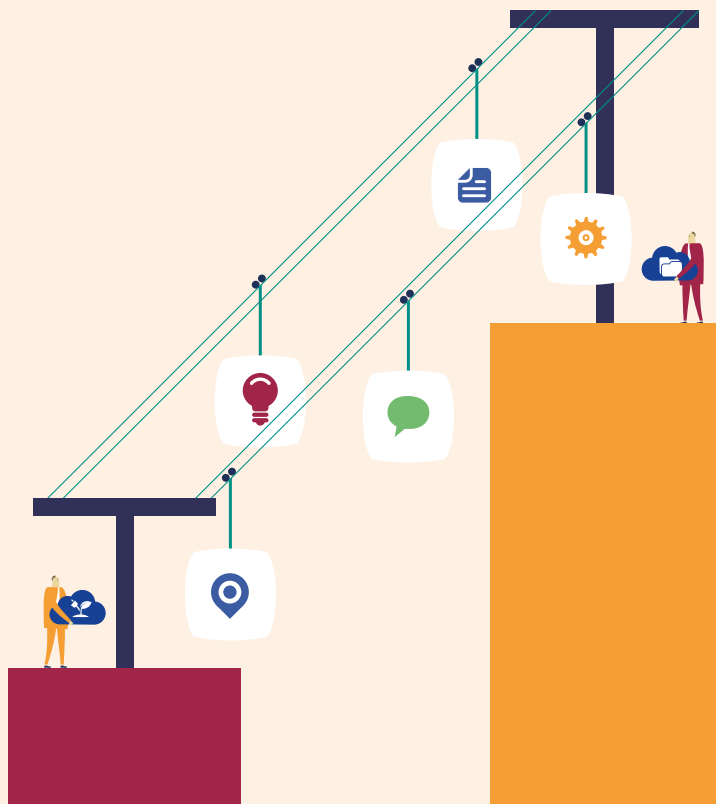
When the impact of an old and overloaded **wastewater treatment plant** began to take its toll across Nicosia, representatives from both communities came together to find a solution. This collaborative mindset led to a joint project between the two communities. The EU played a key role by providing 30 % of the project's funds, with 70 % coming from the Sewerage Board of Nicosia. The United Nations Development Programme also offered a guiding hand throughout the implementation.

The Nicosia wastewater treatment plant is a state-of-the-art facility. Constructed from 2010 to 2014, the plant currently treats 30 000 m³ 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. The EU was closely involved in the funding and implementation of the project, working alongside local teams and contractors.



EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT DELIVERED

- 263 km of **water supply distribution networks renewed**.
- Three **wastewater treatment plants** constructed.
- 99 km of **sewage networks** constructed.
- Seven **refuse collection trucks** supplied.
- Two incinerators for **animal by-products** supplied.



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The EU is providing assistance to key economic sectors preparing for a settlement through projects supporting the **private sector and rural areas** as well as **human resources development**. The EU also contributes to tangible improvements in the area of **animal disease eradication and food safety**.

CASE STUDY

The Commission considers small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship as key to ensuring economic growth, innovation, job creation and social integration. The EU-funded **Innovative Entrepreneurship** project supports entrepreneurship, an area that has shown great potential to develop the Turkish Cypriot economy.

The project contributes to the development of a more **conducive entrepreneurship ecosystem** and an improved innovation culture in the Turkish Cypriot community, leading to the establishment and growth of more innovative, young businesses. It also improves links between the **research and business communities**, allowing the Turkish Cypriot community to benefit from and link up to complementary projects in Cyprus and the EU.



EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT DELIVERED

- 138 projects for **schools, lifelong learning organisations and the labour market**.
- More than 150 **grants to small and medium-sized enterprises / start-ups**.
- **Consultancy services and training** for more than 1 000 **businesses and entrepreneurs**.
- **Training** for almost 200 farmers to improve **water-use efficiency and farm hygiene**.
- **Information** for over 800 farmers about **disease-related risks, disease prevention** and the long-term benefits of **disease elimination among livestock**.



RECONCILIATION, CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES AND SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY

The EU supports the reconciliation process through the implementation of **confidence-building measures**. EU funding to the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage contributes to island-wide restoration works. The **Committee on Missing Persons** also benefits from EU funding. Its objective is to recover, identify, and return to their families the remains of 2002 persons declared missing by both communities as a consequence of the tragic events of 1963-64 and 1974. In addition, support for civil society is provided through continued technical assistance to bolster the capacity of **civil society organisations** and strengthen their role and democratic engagement.



EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT DELIVERED

- 74 projects for **civil society organisations** supported.
- 974 **missing persons** identified and their remains returned to their families.
- 87 **cultural heritage** sites supported island-wide.

CASE STUDY

The EU-funded **Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage** has undertaken conservation work at culturally symbolic and historically significant sites across Cyprus. The two leaders of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, Ali Tuncay and Takis Hadjidemetriou, have a clear mandate: ‘the recognition, promotion, and protection of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the island of Cyprus’.

In 2016, the value of their work was recognised when the two men received the European Citizen Award from the European Parliament for their bi-communal cooperation and their promotion of mutual understanding in Cyprus. This work is viewed domestically and internationally as a step forward for **trust and**



collaboration between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. Overall, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage has received almost EUR 20 million from EU funds and programmes.

BRINGING THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY CLOSER TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

To reach this objective, the EU has set up an info point that provides **information about EU policies and actions** in support of the Turkish Cypriot community. It also maintains a website and ensures strong social media presence. Another way of bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU is to make it much easier for people to study and learn abroad. The **EU Scholarship Programme** for the Turkish Cypriot community offers diverse opportunities for students and professionals to study in other EU Member States.



EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT DELIVERED

- **EU info point** established to proactively inform the Turkish Cypriot community about EU policies and the Aid Programme via events, social media and web-based information activities.
- Nearly 1 700 Turkish Cypriots given educational opportunities in EU Member States through **EU scholarships**.

CASE STUDY

Each year more than 150 Turkish Cypriots attend undergraduate or postgraduate courses, short-term courses or internships in other EU Member States through the **EU Scholarship Programme**, offering them a wide range of opportunities.

In many professions, such an experience can be a game changer. Cardiologist Sevgül Maydonozcu Kara used her EU scholarship to attend the Charité University in Berlin, an experience that improved her understanding of heart failure and its diagnosis. When she returned to Cyprus, Sevgül used her experience to set up a protective healthcare unit. Sevgül was able to share her own experience with others to **encourage best practices** to be applied across the community, helping to bring healthcare closer to the standards she experienced in the EU.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE INSTRUMENT

The Commission's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument is used to implement the objectives of the Aid Programme and thus helps **prepare the Turkish Cypriot community for the implementation of the *acquis*** upon the entry into force of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.



EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT DELIVERED

- Assistance in 17 main sectors of the *acquis*.
- **Expert missions, workshops and study visits.**



CASE STUDY

TAIEX support was crucial in the preparation of the **legal text on packaging waste** adopted in December 2018 in line with EU environmental regulations and directives. The legal text applies to all packaging placed on the market in the Turkish Cypriot community and all packaging waste. It enables the Turkish Cypriot community to establish systems for the separate collection, recycling and recovery of packaging waste; to dispose of packaging waste that cannot be recycled or recovered and to engage producer responsibility. An immediate impact of the text's adoption was the **reduction of the use of plastics** as alternatives were provided.

TAIEX continues to provide support in the waste sector to **improve knowledge** on and **increase awareness** of packaging waste in the Turkish Cypriot community and to improve the community's capacity to implement the legal text.

GREEN LINE REGULATION

The **Green Line Regulation** sets out the rules under which people, goods and services can cross the 'Green Line' that separates the government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas of the island.

In recent years, there has been a notable **increase in people crossing** the Green Line. Trade across the Green Line has also increased steadily and currently stands at around **EUR 5.5 million annually**. Goods can cross the Green Line provided that they comply with the relevant rules. Plastic products are the most traded item, followed by fresh fish, construction materials and wooden furniture.



EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT DELIVERED

- Enabling **trade** in new products and encouraging **higher standards**.
- Experts from EU Member States ensuring that products that cross the Green Line **comply with the relevant EU legislation**.
- Five new Green Line **crossing points** opened.

CASE STUDY

Fish is one of only two animal products, along with honey, that can currently be traded across the Green Line. In order for **Turkish Cypriot fish traders** to get registered for Green Line trade, their boats must first be checked by EU experts. EU requirements and expert inspections have led to an improvement in the quality and hygiene of storage facilities and vessels.

EU standards are positive for the industry, as prohibiting the catching and selling of undersized fish helps to conserve stocks. The Green Line Regulation has also allowed fishermen to sell their fish at market value. The benefits of this trade are not only financial. Fishing professionals on either side of the Green Line have begun to develop friendships. The Green Line Regulation provides the opportunity to engage in a dialogue and to **build trust** between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities.



CONTACT DETAILS



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Further details on the work related to Cyprus settlement support

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Find out more

- DG REFORM:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/structural-reform-support_en
- Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/aid-programme-turkish-cypriot-community_en