



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY
THE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
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AT THE
8TH CONFERENCE OF THE STATE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS
CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

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Abu Dhabi

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me, at the outset, to express my sincere appreciation to the co-organisers and hosts of this important Conference.

1. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus, is committed as a priority to the fight against corruption and the promotion of transparency. In this context, the National Strategy against Corruption was approved by the Council of Ministers on 28 June 2017 and was subsequently published by the Ministry of Justice and Public Order (MJPO). Furthermore, a National Horizontal Action Plan against Corruption implementing the principles enshrined in the National Strategy has been prepared by the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and was approved by the Council of Ministers on the 15 May 2019. The national action plan aims at improving the political, social and legislative environment through coordinated actions in 6 key pillars:

1. prevention
2. education
3. raising awareness and changing society's attitude and perceptions on relevant issues
4. modernization of legislation
5. suppression
6. monitoring through increased compliance with sound administration rules and enhanced accountability by public and private bodies

2. Many of the actions that have been included in the five year National Horizontal Action Plan, are well underway as follows:

As regards the Education and Awareness achievements so far

In relation to one of the main pillars foreseen in the Action Plan, concerning the ability of society to recognise and reject corruption, the MJPO intends to engage the youth in Cyprus in the fight against corruption, since it shares the statement of the Parliamentary Assembly's Resolution of 2017 that young people of all ages "have a fundamental role to play in bringing a new culture of integrity to all levels of the society" and thus eventually shifting public perception towards

a new ethics consciousness. The MJPO has already prepared a specific draft Action Plan for the Young People which will be presented for consultation with all actors involved. A public consultation day is being organised concerning the adoption of a Youth Declaration Against Corruption. Target date beginning of 2020. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order emphasises how high it considers the involvement of the young people in the fight against corruption, and towards that end, it published a Call , a Competition for all University and College students in Cyprus for developing the anticorruption campaign's logo, poster and motto.

The Anti Corruption Awareness Day on the 11th June 2019, for all Focal Points of Public and Private sectors for the presentation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan marked the beginning of the First Training Cycle of Public Officials for the Prevention and fight of Corruption in the Public Sector. The training days focused on a wide range of crucial and hot topics such as Corruption and Public Administration, Ethics and Integrity, Public Procurement and Internal Audit.

Special emphasis is given in promoting the cooperation of the government with various actors of society through the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding, with Universities and relevant NGOs. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order has an open channel of communication with these actors supporting and promoting the organisation of educational and awareness raising events.

As regards the Legislative Work so far

- Following the recommendations received by European and International Organisations, the Government prepared a **bill for the establishment of an Independent Authority against Corruption**, which was submitted to the House of Representatives on the 15h March 2019. The Independent Authority will have as a primary responsibility to ensure the consistency and effectiveness of the actions taken by the public and private sector in preventing and combating corruption.
- In addition, a **Bill pertaining to regulate lobbying** and to increase transparency in decision-making processes was submitted to the House of Representatives on 30th May 2019.

- The protection of whistle blowers is sought to be achieved through a Bill entitled “the Reporting of Acts of Corruption (Supplementary Measures for Protection and Leniency) Law of 2017”. The bill provides supplementary provisions on the protection of persons reporting acts of corruption both in the public and the private sectors (whistle-blowers, persons not involved in the acts), i.e further to the protection already provided for in the Protection of Witnesses Law 95(I)/2001. Also, other measures of leniency for those who are involved in acts of corruption, but voluntarily report to the police and/or offer cooperation with the authorities resulting in the full investigation and prosecution of the case (for instance, the maximum penalty on conviction for them is half of the one provided for the offence).
- In order to combat corruption in the **Cyprus Police, a pack of three bills and three sets of Regulations** prepared by the Ministry of Justice and Public Order were enacted providing inter alia for the establishment of an Internal Audit Service within the Police, missioned to inquire on and investigate all allegations and complaints (eponymous or anonymous) regarding corrupt practices or omissions, on the part of members of the police. It is worth mentioning the website platform set up by the Cyprus Police called “Report of police corruption” through which any person can file a Complaint and/ or submit information via the Internet on corruption issues concerning members of the police. Specific figures given in the recently submitted annual report of the Police Internal Service show considerable progress in the fight against corruption in the Police Force.
- A **Law on the fight against Manipulation of Sports Competitions** aiming to combat corruptive behaviour in sports, was enacted on 15.12.17. The law provides for the establishment of a five member Ethics and Sports Integrity Commission. The Commission is the “national platform” according to article 13 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions and it is also the national contact point for the purpose of the above mentioned Convention. The Commission is the higher body monitoring all aspects relating to match fixing and acts as a platform, running a hotline for complaints while at

the same time it will have the opportunity to act at its own initiative, to investigate incidents of possible match fixing. To this end, the Commission has a broad scope of powers including collecting all required information and proceeding with preliminary interrogations so that a complete report be prepared and sent to the General Attorney with suggestions whether there are reasonable grounds to start a criminal procedure or not.

- For purposes of enhancing transparency in public life and combating corruption, the Government had laid to the House of Representatives a bill for the amendment of Article 15 of the Constitution and two other bills amending the 2004 laws on the declaration of assets and other interests by the President, the Ministers and the Members of the House of Representatives (Law 49(I)/2004) and certain other Officers of the Republic (Law 50(I)/2004). The bills were enacted into Laws in 2016 (the Constitutional Amendment) and 2017 (the amendments to Laws 49(I)/2004 and 50(I)/2004). Both Laws provide for the obligation of the President, the Ministers, the Members of the House of Representatives, certain Officers of the Republic, high ranking public officers and other publicly exposed persons to submit detailed declarations of their property and assets together with those of their spouses and under-age children, within 3 months from assuming office, every 3 years as long as they hold office and within 3 months after leaving office. The independent bodies of control have been appointed and the laws are in observation.

3. Other notable measures taken in the framework of this National Horizontal Action Plan against Corruption, concern the designation of focal points at every Ministry and Organisation, the adoption of codes of conduct for the Council of Ministers, as well as the adoption of codes of conduct for Public Prosecutors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. Fighting Corruption is, undoubtedly, a huge challenge for every Government. The first step and perhaps one of the most important preconditions of any attempt in this fight, is genuine and honest political leadership and commitment to bring the anti-corruption process further.