



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
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Excellency,

I have been following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Republic of Cyprus and welcome the constructive engagement of your Government during the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the UPR Working Group in January 2019.

As the final outcome report on the review of Cyprus has been recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 41<sup>st</sup> session, I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a number of areas raised in the two reports that my Office had prepared for the review of Cyprus – the Compilation of United Nations information and the Summary of Stakeholders' submissions – which I consider in need of particular attention over the next four and a half years, until the next cycle of the UPR. In identifying those areas, I have considered the statements and/or recommendations made by 82 delegations and the presentation made and responses provided by the delegation of Cyprus. I have also considered the actions taken by the Government to implement the 87 recommendations supported during the second cycle of the UPR. The aforementioned areas cover a range of issues, which appear in the annex to this letter.

I commend the establishment of a National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2018-2021) aimed at implementing the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the appointment of a Commissioner for Gender Equality. I welcome the adoption of a National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography. I also welcome that Cyprus is supporting the ratification of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and is committed to re-submit a ratification bill to the House of Representatives.

I also appreciate that the Safety and Health Law covers domestic workers, that the supervision of private employment agencies has been strengthened and that the performance of the inspectorate mechanism has been enhanced, and welcome that Cyprus is attaching great importance to the protection of cultural heritage and its linkage to the enjoyment of cultural rights.

I encourage Cyprus to develop a comprehensive national human rights action plan in order to achieve concrete results in the areas highlighted in the annex to this letter and to facilitate the preparations for Cyprus' fourth cycle of the UPR. My advice to all Member States is to develop and implement national action plans in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the national human rights institution and civil society organizations and, where necessary, with the support of international organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

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H.E. Mr. Nikos Christodoulides  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Cyprus

I also encourage Cyprus to establish a national mechanism for comprehensive reporting and follow-up in relation to recommendations received from all international and regional human rights mechanisms and to treaty obligations, linking this to the Sustainable Development Goals. I strongly recommend the use of the OHCHR practical guide on this topic, which is available at: [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR\\_PUB\\_16\\_1\\_NMRF\\_PracticalGuide.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf).

Please, kindly note that I am sharing my advice with all Member States as they go through the third cycle of the UPR with a view to assisting them with the implementation of the recommendations, following the review. An important measure that can contribute positively to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term reporting. Therefore, I strongly encourage all Member States to submit a voluntary mid-term report two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome report. In this regard, I encourage Cyprus to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the third cycle of the review, by 2021.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1, paragraph 98): *"The Human Rights Council's universal periodic review process is now entering a new cycle, with every Member State scheduled for a third round of scrutiny. We will work to strengthen the relevance, precision and impact of the Council's recommendations, including by providing better support to Member States in implementation, stronger collaboration with United Nations country teams and the establishment of national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up to link the universal periodic review to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals."*

I look forward to discussing with you ways in which my Office may assist Cyprus in relation to the areas identified in this letter and its annex.

Please, accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Michelle Bachelet  
High Commissioner for Human Rights

cc: H.E. Ms. Leda Koursoumba  
Law Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus



## **Annex**

### **Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies**

- Acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- Acceding to the International Labour Organization Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No.189).
- Acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- Submitting the State party report under article 12 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

### **National human rights framework**

- Ensuring that the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights fully complies with the Paris Principles.

### **Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law**

#### **A. Cross-cutting issues**

##### *Equality and non-discrimination*

- Combating and preventing racism, discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes, including against migrants, Turkish Cypriots and Roma, and ensuring that such acts do not go unpunished.
- Continuing awareness raising campaigns and education programmes to promote tolerance, respect for diversity, dialogue, trust and the importance of cultural heritage.
- Ensuring that the Roma community has access, without discrimination, to employment, housing, health care and education.
- Strengthening measures for the integration of migrants into society.
- Continuing to address societal discrimination and hostility against LGBTI persons.

#### **B. Civil and political rights**

##### *Right to life, liberty and security of person*

- Ensuring that all allegations of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials are promptly and effectively investigated and that alleged perpetrators are prosecuted.



- Continuing efforts to address overcrowding in prisons and detention centres and to improve conditions of detention.
- Ensuring that the use of isolation in detention is recorded, and ensuring that juveniles are never kept in solitary confinement.
- Reducing the length of pre-trial detention.

*Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law*

- Providing free legal aid to detained persons, including asylum seekers, from the outset of deprivation of liberty, and ensuring that they have access to information in this regard.
- Ending the practice of detaining persons in police custody for prolonged periods.
- Guaranteeing appropriate redress to relatives of missing persons identified by the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus.

*Fundamental freedoms*

- Ensuring that there are no restrictions on religious worship, including by facilitating greater access of residents of the northern part of the island to the southern part, effective access to religious sites, and provision of facilities and essential services.
- Ensuring a safe and enabling environment for journalists and ensuring that they do not face threats or reprisals for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

*Prohibition of all forms of slavery*

- Intensifying efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls, including through the special mechanism for regular inspections of private employment agencies.
- Conducting effective investigations of trafficking in persons, punishing perpetrators, and ensuring that victims of trafficking are identified, protected and rehabilitated.

*Right to family life*

- Providing for the possibility of family reunification for those persons that have been granted subsidiary protection.

**C. Economic, social and cultural rights**

*Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work*

- Intensifying efforts to address unemployment, including youth unemployment.
- Ensuring that the national minimum wage guarantees a decent living for workers and their families.
- Addressing labour exploitation of migrant workers, in particular those that are domestic workers.

### *Right to social security*

- Ensuring adequate financial support for persons with disabilities and for families of children with disabilities.
- Ensuring that social assistance provided to asylum seekers is increased and allows for a decent living, and is disbursed in cash instead of vouchers.

### *Right to an adequate standard of living*

- Intensifying efforts to combat poverty, in particular child poverty.
- Ensuring that the provision of housing unit to the Roma community does not result in a *de facto* segregation.

### *Right to health*

- Improving the public health system and addressing long waiting lists.
- Ensuring access to health care for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers, including free emergency medical care.

### *Right to education*

- Addressing the low school attendance and high dropout rates of children of the Roma community.
- Ensuring inclusive education for children with disabilities at all levels of education.

## **D. Rights of specific persons or groups**

### *Women*

- Increasing the employment rate of women.
- Combating domestic violence, assisting victims, prosecuting perpetrators and imposing sentences that are commensurate with the seriousness of the crime.
- Intensifying efforts to increase the proportion of women in decision-making positions in the public sector, including in peace negotiations.

### *Children*

- Developing alternatives to imprisonment of juveniles.
- Ensuring the independence and impartiality of legal assistance and representation for unaccompanied migrant children.

### *Persons with disabilities*

- Intensifying efforts to promote the employment of persons with disabilities.

### *Minorities*

- Continuing to promote the integration of Turkish Cypriots into the civil service.



- Increasing the availability of television and radio programmes in minority languages.

*Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers*

- Refraining from detaining undocumented migrants and asylum seekers, except as a measure of last resort.
- Intensifying efforts to ensure that conditions in reception centres are adequate, including the availability of adequate health care, sanitary facilities, counselling and language and vocational training.
- Ensuring that asylum seekers have a wider access to the labour market.

*Stateless persons*

- Developing national legislation and procedures addressing statelessness and ensuring that the nationality laws are applied indiscriminately on the basis of clearly defined criteria.

**E. Specific regions or territories**

- Ensuring and continuing bi-communal efforts in order to preserve cultural heritage and religious sites, including in the northern part of the island, and ensuring greater effective access thereto.