



MINISTRY OF LABOUR, WELFARE AND SOCIAL INSURANCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR INSPECTION

The basic aims of the Department of Labour Inspection are the safeguarding of adequate levels of safety and health at work for all workers, the preservation of atmospheric air quality where it is good and its improvement where it is needed and the protection of the public and of the environment by effectively controlling industrial air pollution, the major accident hazards, the risks due to chemical substances and the risks that arise from the use of, or exposure to, ionising radiation.

The fulfilment of the aforementioned aims is accomplished by means of a suitable institutional and legislative framework, the implementation of an effective inspection system, the continuous raising of public awareness, the training and education of the Department's personnel and the cooperation with the social partners and other interested parties.

Moreover, the Department has a Strategic Planning Unit which deals with the formulation and implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Department. This work involves, among others, the preparation of an action plan and the mapping of the progress of the implementation of activities and actions included in the Strategic Plan.

The headquarters of the Department are situated in Lefkosia whereas there are District Offices in Lefkosia, Lemesos, Larnaka, Ammochostos and Pafos. In 2017, there were 79 posts in the Department of Labour Inspection, of which 14 were vacant.

During 2017, the Department participated in various committees and working groups of the European Union and other International Organizations on issues related to the areas of its competency.

In the text that follows, the policy areas of the Department are presented along with a short description of the work carried out in 2017.

1. Safety and Health at Work

This policy area deals with:

- (a) All issues that relate to the protection of safety, health and the wellbeing of the workers, including the organisation and management of safety and health issues at work, at local and national level.
- (b) Issues of safety and health that relate to work equipment.

- (c) Issues related to the risks to health arising from the use of asbestos, of chemical and biological agents, of carcinogenic and mutagenic agents, as well as from physical agents, such as noise, vibration or heat and from ergonomic factors, such as manual lifting and handling of loads, monotonous work, pace of work, etc.
- (d) Issues arising from major accident hazards in which dangerous substances are involved, aiming at accident prevention and/or the mitigation of their consequences on the public and the environment.
- (e) Issues on safety of offshore oil and gas operations.
- (f) Issues related to the management and control of chemical products which are manufactured, imported, exported, used and placed on the Cyprus market as well as issues related to the exposure on the market and/or use of chemical substances and mixtures in working and domestic environments.
- (g) The provision of information and training to employers and workers on issues of occupational safety and health by means of training programmes and informative material.

Also, the Department enforces specific legislation on the safety, health and well-being of, young persons and pregnant women at work.

The Department serves as the Focal Point for Cyprus for the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. Within this context, the Department is responsible for the organisation and coordination of the National Information Network. The biennial campaign for 2016-2017 focused on "Healthy Workplaces for All Ages". The Department also constitutes the National Focal Point of Cyprus for the European Network for the Promotion of Health at the Workplace.

The Department carried out inspection campaigns within the framework of the year's strategic plan based on accurate and true data from previous inspections, accidents, as well as surveys. These campaigns covered whole year activities as well as monthly basis activities. Whole year activities included the control of implementing a suitable and appropriate risk management system and the consultation and participation of workers on health and safety issues at work. Monthly basis activities included activities such as specialised inspections' campaigns on highrisk industrial sectors including manufacturing and construction sectors and the National and European Good Practice Competition.

Throughout the year under review, 3623 inspections of workplaces on safety and health issues were carried out, 433 warning letters were sent to duty holders, 2070 work accidents to employees in the course of their work were notified to the Department and investigated, 14 penal cases were concluded in court, 17 new legal cases were prepared and 38 training courses/sessions were delivered to 2027 persons.

Furthermore, during 2017, 11 companies were approved to carry out work on removal of asbestos insulation or spreading and a total of 70 specific Work Plans were also approved before starting asbestos work. Also, special requirements for safety and health at work were examined and set out in 911 in total applications related to Planning and Building Permits as well as Approval Certificates of premises, which were intended to be used or used as workplaces and / or as residential units.

Additionally, inspections were carried out to all industrial establishments operating in Cyprus and fall under the Regulations on the Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances (Seveso Directive).

Furthermore, 282 inspections were carried out for the enforcement of the legislation on Chemical Substances, while the two Helpdesks on the application of the European Regulations of REACH and CLP responded to 471 queries (191 concerning REACH and 280 concerning CLP Regulation).

The Department is also focal point for SAICM (Strategic Approach for International Chemicals Management), the Rotterdam International Convention (PIC) for the control of the import and export of certain dangerous substances and mixtures, and finally for the Stockholm Convention (POPs) for the control of the chemicals characterized as Persistent Organic Pollutants.

In addition to the above, the Department actively participates to several European Committees, and International bodies relevant to its competences.

2. Offshore Oil and Gas Operations

The Director of the Department is the competent authority for the health and safety in offshore oil and gas operations. On 14 June 2017, the Safety and Health at Work (Prescribed Fees for the Evaluation of Documents Relevant to the Safety of Offshore Oil and Natural Gas Operations) Order of 2017 (P.I. 240/2017) was published.

In 2017 a drilling operation was completed and a second drilling operation started at the end of December. For the above mentioned drilling operations in 2017 two Major Hazard Reports were assessed and accepted, and four well notifications along with 50 daily drilling reports were assessed. One inspection was carried out on the offshore drilling rig, an inspection report was prepared and two improvement notices were delivered.

The Department had several meetings with companies operating in offshore oil and gas exploration activities in the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and discussed their obligations on the basis of the existing legislation. Also, dealt with the evaluation of parts of the applications for the third round of licensing of oil and gas operations in the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone. The Department also submitted opinions as a member of the Environmental Impact Assessment Board and the Offshore Protocol for 5 Offshore Licenses.

In connection with offshore oil and gas operations the Department actively participates in the CYS TC22 Technical Committee for Hydrocarbons, which deals with European and International Standards and several relevant to health and safety in offshore oil and gas operations European Committees. Inspectors from the Department have participated in joined inspections of offshore facilities organized by other Member States and attended training programs on health and safety issues on oil and gas operations.

3. Inspectable Machinery, Equipment with CE Marking, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Safety and Drivers' Working Hours

Issues of inspection and certification of inspectable machinery, such as steam boilers, steam receivers, cranes, winches, overhead travelling cranes and air receivers are dealt within this policy area. During the reviewed period, 1197 inspections were carried out for machinery and equipment safety purposes.

To safeguard the enforcement of the Regulations concerning the Operation, Maintenance and Audit of Lifts (P.I. 533/2012), the Department of Labour Inspection carried out 83 inspections on the stakeholders' premises (Authorized Lift Auditors and Maintenance Persons) and on installed lifts.

Furthermore, the Department is responsible to enforce the harmonised legislations on 7 categories of products to safeguard the free movement of goods that bear the CE mark and hence safeguarding the safety and health of users and consumers. Specifically, on (a) Pressure Equipment, (b) Simple Pressure Vessels, (c) Machinery, (d) Lifts, (e) Personal Protective Equipment, (f) Equipment and Protective Systems for Use in Explosive Atmospheres and (g) Noise Emissions from Outdoor Equipment. In this context, 100 market surveillance activities were carried out, 27 Announcements were issued to alert the public for 80 dangerous products, a fine of €500 was imposed on an Installer for a non-compliant lift and a number of non-compliant machinery products were withdrawn or prevented from entering the Cyprus market in cooperation with the Customs Authorities.

In 2017, 1503 inspections were carried out on LPG vessels and installations, including mobile LPG installations on vehicles, such as caravans and canteens, as part of the licensing process of such premises under the Petroleum legislation. In total, 1905 premises were inspected where LPG and other petroleum liquids were stored. Following the permission for the use of LPG as an alternative car fuel, the Department is implementing an Inspection Scheme of LPG fuelling stations and car conversion and maintenance stations to enforce the relevant legislation.

The excessive working hours of drivers whose primary activity is driving is known to be one of the causes of traffic accidents. With the enforcement of the relevant legislation and the utilisation of inspection data, the Department decides on policies to improve the drivers' working conditions, prevent road accidents while maintaining a level playing field and reducing competition inequalities between businesses. In 2017, 56955 drivers' working days were checked according to relevant legislation, out of which 5615 were conducted at the road side in cooperation with the Cyprus Police Force and 51340 at the enterprises' premises.

4. Control of Industrial Air Pollution

The main aim of this policy area is to monitor and control the air pollution caused by substances emitted to the environment during the operation of various industrial installations, in an effort to safeguard the health of the public and the protection of the environment.

During 2017, emphasis was given on raising awareness of operators of industrial installations as to their obligations.

Emphasis was also placed on facilitating public access to environmental information and specifically on the annual amounts of pollutant releases and waste transfer from facilities that fall within the scope of the European Regulation 166/2006/EC concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR Regulation), through a publicly accessible electronic database. In 2017, the Department of Labour Inspection submitted to the European Commission and the European Environment Agency, the ninth annual report with environmental data from industrial activities in Cyprus according to the requirements of the above Regulation.

During 2017, the Department of Labour Inspection dealt with the granting of 16 Air Emission Permits and 29 Industrial Emissions Permits. In addition, 27 Air Emission permits of petrol

stations were amended because of the installation in these stations of equipment for Stage II petrol vapour recovery during vehicle refueling. The Department of Labour Inspection carried out 151 environmental inspections, of which 108 inspections were carried out at registrable installations (51 to check for compliance with Air Emission Permits and 57 to check for compliance with Industrial Emissions Permits), 35 inspections at non-registrable installations, and 8 for the investigation of public complaints related to the operation of neighbouring factories.

Four penal cases for violating the Atmospheric Pollution Control Law, which were pending before the Court, were concluded.

5. Air Quality

The Department of Labour Inspection continued in 2017 to monitor the ambient air with a network of 10 stations. The results, together with other useful information on air quality, were given to the public, on-line, through the respective website www.airquality.gov.cy, through indoor/outdoor information panels and through four island-wide TV stations after their central news bulletin.

The Department of Labour Inspection, in order to inform the public, has proceeded to the preparation of a mobile phone application, for the immediate information of the employees, the sensitive population groups, the public, the relevant bodies, the visitors and other people interested about air quality. Through this application, the people can have access to the information regarding the air quality, based on the different colours of pollution levels on Cyprus map as well as based on the concentrations of pollutants per station.

In addition, during the Sahara or Asia dust storms that occurred in 2017, announcements were issued through mass media, to warn and advise the population and especially the vulnerable groups and give recommendations on how to limit their exposure to the high dust concentration in the air.

The assessment of Air Quality in Cyprus showed that the concentrations of most pollutants are below the relevant limits with the exception of Ozone and suspended Particulate Matter (PM). The source apportionment for quantifying the contribution of natural events and transboundary pollution to the high PM concentrations measured in Cyprus continued by the chemical analysis of PM samples. As a result, the number of daily exceedances due to local and anthropogenic sources was shown to be less than 35 which are allowed by the legislation.

The Department of Labour Inspection, in cooperation with other authorities, continued with the implementation of the National Action Plan, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in February 2008, with an aim to reduce further the Particulate Matter emissions from local sources.

The National Reference Laboratory (NRL) of Air Quality was accredited by the Cyprus Organization for the Promotion of Quality with the EN 17025 standard from 6.6.2013. The inspection of conformity to the standard is done annually. The NRL participates in the Laboratory Intercomparison which takes place at the Joint Research Center of the European Union (Ispra-Italy). Participation is compulsory at least once every three years, as determined by legislation and concerns the methods of measurement of NO_x, O₃, CO, SO₂ and C₆H₆.

Finally, the Air Quality Section, acting as the National Focal Point for the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, is actively involved in the Convention's activities and its Protocols. Within this framework, the annual emissions of the air pollutants of Cyprus are calculated every year and are forwarded to the Executive Body of the Convention and to the European Environment Agency.

6. Radiation Protection

The Radiation Inspection and Control Service (RICS) was established in the Department of Labour Inspection (Radiation Protection Section) under the Protection from Ionising Radiation and Nuclear Safety Laws of 2002 to 2017.

In addition to the administration and enforcement of the relevant legislation and the implementation of the governmental policy in this area, RICS is also a center of expertise with respect to ionising radiation and is the focal point of the Republic of Cyprus, for these matters, with the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other International Organisations or Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Regulatory Authorities.

The main objectives of RICS are:

- To ensure adequate levels of protection for the health of workers, the public, the patients, and the public and the protection of the environment from the risks arising from exposure to ionising radiation or, from the release of radioactive substances into the environment, or contamination of the environment with radioisotopes.
- To ensure adequate levels of protection for the workers and other persons at workplaces from the risks that may arise due to exposure to or use of non-ionising radiation.

During 2017, RICS continued its activities for a more effective and efficient regulatory framework, through licensing, inspections, enforcement and the organisation of education and training activities.

In 2017, RICS continued monitoring the environmental radioactivity levels in air, water, soil, food, animal feed and in other materials and commodities, through measurements, sampling and analysis and through the operation of the Telemetric Radioactivity Monitoring Network.

Also, RICS continued the implementation of the National Programme on the safe and responsible management of radioactive waste and disused sealed radioactive sources in Cyprus and of the National Plan ELECTRA on emergency preparedness and response in case of a radiological or nuclear accident, in Cyprus or abroad.

The personnel of RICS participated in various meetings, seminars, committees etc. of the IAEA, in the IAEA General Conference, in the 7th Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety in the 3rd Extraordinary and Organisational Meeting for the 6th Review Meeting under the Joint Convention, in USIE (IAEA) and ECURIE EURDEP (EU) activities and exercises, on preparedness and response to nuclear or radiological incidents and in various other EU meetings, workshops, trainings and other activities.

Finally, RICS continued its technical cooperation with the IAEA, the EURATOM, the Greek Atomic Energy Commission and other Institutions on issues concerning radiation protection and nuclear safety and security.