



MUNICIPAL NEWS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNION OF CYPRUS MUNICIPALITIES

Friday September 28, 2007

ISSUE 7

CYPRUS TO ADOPT THE EURO ON 1 JANUARY 2008

The European Council decided on the 10th July 2007 to allow Cyprus (along with Malta) to adopt the euro as its currency as from 1 January 2008.

It also adopted regulations setting permanent conversion rates for the Cypriot pound and the Maltese lira against the euro and adjusting certain technical provisions on introduction of the euro.

Cyprus and Malta will be issuing euro notes and coins at the same time as adopting the euro. The conversion rates are set at 0.585274 Cyprus pounds to the euro and 0.4293 Maltese lira to the euro, which correspond to the current central rates of both currencies within the EU's ERM II exchange rate mechanism.

In the coming months, Cyprus and Malta



will have to complete and finalise their crucial practical preparations to ensure that the changeover to the euro takes place smoothly, as was the case in Slovenia this year. **(Continue to page 2).**

CYPRIOT MUNICIPALITIES SIGN THE CEMR CHARTER FOR EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN

In 2005, with the financial support of the European Commission, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) launched a project on "The town for equality". That project aimed mainly to collect best practice cases of gender equality in European local governments as well as at setting up a methodology to help local representatives achieve true gender equality in their municipalities.

The result of that initial project was the signing of the **European Charter for equality of women and men in local life**. The aim of the CEMR is to encourage local politicians to sign the Charter, thus committing themselves publicly to implement its measures in their municipalities: by signing the charter, the city commits itself to promote gender-based equality and implement the principles of the charter in its constituency. These include the balanced participation of women and men in the decision making process, the assertion that a gender perspective will be taken into account in all activities of local and regional government, and the drawing up of action plans adequately funded to reach the objectives laid down in the charter.

The participation of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities in this effort has been important; inter alia it hosted in Cyprus one of the CEMR Conferences that aimed to the preparation of the Charter. Further on, the Charter has been distributed to all the Municipalities of Cyprus, and 20 of them (out of a total of 33) have already signed it.

The text of the "European Charter for equality of women and men in local life", the list of municipalities, towns and regions having signed the charter and further information are available here: http://www.ccre.org/communiqués_de_presse_detail_en.htm?ID=206.

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(From page 1) A big load of these preparations has been trusted to the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, which has the responsibility to prepare and inform Cypriot Municipalities and citizens about all the practical aspects of the changeover and assure that this will take place as smoothly as possible.

You can preview the Cypriot euro coins here: http://www.centralbank.gov.cy/nqcontent.cf?m?a_id=4704&lang=en

For the national Cypriot changeover plan and further information, please visit: http://www.euro.cy/euro/euro.nsf/dmlindex_en/dmlindex_en?opendocument

Emissions trading: Commission accepts Cyprus' national allocation plan

The European Commission has recently concluded the assessment of Cyprus' national plan for allocating carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission allowances for the 2008-2012 trading period of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS).

The Commission accepted the Cypriot plan on condition that certain changes are made, including a reduction in the total number of emission allowances proposed. The cleared annual allocation is 5.48 million tonnes of CO₂ allowances, 23% less than Cyprus had proposed.



The Emissions Trading Scheme ensures that greenhouse gas emissions from the energy and industry sectors covered are cut at least cost to the economy, thus helping the EU and its Member States to meet their emission commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation

The European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is a new Community legal instrument, aimed at boosting cooperation between European regions. Created by the European Regulation n. 1082/2006, this instrument is directly applicable in all 27 EU Member States.

It enables the creation of entities, called "EGTCs", with a legal identity, composed of members (mainly public institutions from at least two Member States), whose goal is to develop projects of common interest.

The EGTC aims to overcome the existing obstacles hindering territorial co-operation in Europe: each EGTC would be invested with a legal personality, and would be based on an agreement between the participating local and regional authorities, known as a 'Convention of European Cross-border Co-operation'.

The EGTC can be used for a range of different purposes: one of the major ones would be the management of EU-funded programmes under the Structural Funds. In this regard, INTERREG IV programmes, whose management structures are being set up, appear as an ideal field for the creation of the first EGTCs.

To explore the possibilities of this new instrument, the Committee of the Regions has set up an expert group. The EGTC Expert Group is as a pool of expertise on EGTC and works as a bridge between practitioners and institutions. It is aimed:

- at monitoring the adoption and implementation of provisions at Member State level;
- at facilitating the exchange of experiences on the establishment of EGTCs at territorial level and share knowledge of best practices in the field;
- at identifying the potential exploitation of EGTC as a tool for cohesive territorial development;
- at improving communication on EGTC opportunities and challenges at territorial level.

The Union of Cyprus Municipalities will be representing Cyprus to the Expert Group.



Limassol Municipality launches experiment in local democracy

LIMASSOL Municipality has announced the introduction of a new network of district councils, consisting of local representatives, which will complement the present decision-making system, giving the citizen an additional channel for participation.

The local/district councils will be dealing with local issues such as health and hygiene, development projects, parks, as well as social and sporting activities.

These councils, in co-operation with the Committee of Regional Communication and Development, will bring the issues before Limassol Municipal Council.

The Municipal Council will still be responsible for decision-making but the creation of the district councils system will offer the citizen another outlet for participating in the decision-making at local level. The local/district councils will be given neither the power nor the resources afforded to the elected Municipal Council.



Under this new venture, 18 local councils have been created. Limassol municipality is actually divided into 21 localities, but some of these have been joined for the purposes of the new system.

More specifically, the Ayios Antonios local council comprises the Ayios Antonios, Arnaut and Jamii Jedit localities. The localities of Ayia Fila and Panayia Evangelistria have also been joined to form the Ayia Fila Evangelistria local council.

Cypriot Municipalities add the local dimension to EU history exhibition

On the 26th of October 2007, the Museum of Europe is opening its doors to welcome visitors to an exhibition staged to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, marking half a century of European unification.



From the devastated Europe of 1945 to the challenges that are today facing our continent, visitors will come face to face with History with a capital "H" but also with their own, more personal history. As you will realise while making your way around the exhibition, we are all protagonists in this incredible adventure, this ongoing quest to unify Europe.

The exhibition boasts the state-of-the art resources of contemporary museography: backdrops, films, multimedia and interactive tools guide you through exhibits that have been chosen above all for their authenticity: over 500 of them are on loan from 80 museums across Europe.

The dress of a little girl sown together out of the flags of the Allied Forces, the first steel ingot melted down by the ECSC, a coal sack from the Berlin Air Bridge, the illustrated diary kept by a young Hungarian during the 1956 anti-Communist uprising, the log of an English soldier during the Suez crisis, pieces of the iron curtain and the Berlin wall, a Stasi-owned "odour pot" as well as everyday objects: all poignant souvenirs brought back from a 50 year old European adventure.

Within this exhibition, the Brussels office of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities gives a local tone to the common European history, being the only local or regional authority actively represented in one of the stands.

For more information on this interactive exhibition please visit the website of the Museum of Europe: <http://www.expo-europe.be/en.html>

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THE UNION OF CYPRUS MUNICIPALITIES

The Union of Cyprus Municipalities was established in 1981. Even though membership is voluntary, all municipalities (33), accounting for 65 per cent of the population of Cyprus, are represented.

The main objective of the Union is to contribute to the development of local government autonomy, as well as to act as spokesman of local government interests vis-à-vis the central government and other national organisations and institutions.

The Union's decision-making power is vested in the General Assembly, which may look into and decide for all issues. The Executive Committee implements decisions taken by the General Assembly. The President of the Union represents the Union before any authority, while the Secretary is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Union.

The Union follows closely and participates in international activities related to Local Authorities and in recent years, especially after the accession of the Republic to the EU, it takes an active stand and develops relations with organisations, institutions and departments of the European Union that concern Local Authorities. In this regard, the Union has, since July 2005, opened an Office in Brussels.

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