

Labour Inspection Country Profile: Cyprus

Labour Inspection Structure and Organization

Name of institution that manages work issues

[Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance \(MLSI\)](#)

Department responsible for Labour Inspection

The Department of Labour Inspection (DLI), which is responsible for labour inspection, comprises six sectors: the Safety and Health and Machinery Sector, the Field Operations Sector, the Industrial Pollution Control Sector, the Air Quality Sector, the Radiation Protection Sector and the Chemical Substances Sector. The overall policy of the DLI is drawn at the headquarters, which also has the responsibility of preparing technical advice and instructions and for setting inspection standards.

The departments of the MLSI which are responsible for labour administration, industrial relations and social insurance issues are the following:

The Department of Labour (DL) is responsible for the promotion and implementation of Government policy in the fields of employment and training of human resources, as well as for the care of persons with disabilities.

The Department of Labour Relations (DLR) is responsible for implementing the Government's policy in the area of industrial relations. In particular, the Department is responsible for safeguarding and maintaining industrial peace and healthy conditions in the area of industrial relations, with a view to achieving social cohesion, productivity in work, the establishment of democratic practices and the achievement of socio-economic progress.

The Department of Social Insurance Services (DSIS) is responsible among others for the application of the government policy in the area of social insurance with the implementation of specific schemes and measures, the submission of suggestions regarding government policy aiming to the continuous improvement of the social security based on the international developments and social and economic conditions of Cyprus, the identification of social and economic needs that can be confronted with social security, and the continuous study and evaluation of the schemes and measures which are implemented by the Department in connection with the prescribed targets.

The Social Welfare Services (SWS) aim to safeguard social cohesion and social solidarity; to provide social protection, achieve social inclusion and promote equal opportunities for all citizens in the Republic of Cyprus; to combat poverty and social exclusion and to promote the interests of individuals, families and communities.

Laws that cover organization and functional composition

The acts which contain provisions regarding the function of labour inspection in Cyprus are among others:

Act 35(I) /2007 for Wages Protection

Act 63/2002 (article 20) for Organizing the Working Time

Act 8(I)/1997 (articles 16-17) and 195(I)/2002 for Private Employment Services

Act 133 (I) /2002 (articles 24-28) for Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Training

Act 98(I) /2003 for Protecting Contract Employees

Act 48(I)/2001 (articles 24-25) for Protecting Youth Employment

Scope of Labour Inspection

The basic objective of the DLI is the continuous and steadfast improvement of Occupational Health and Safety standards, to ensure a satisfactory level of air quality and of the environment in general, safeguard of the employees, the public and environment against ionized radiation hazards and chemical substances.

Local Divisions

The DLI has its' headquarters in Nicosia, and four district labour inspection offices in Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca (which also serves the unoccupied areas of the Famagusta district) and Pafos.

Programming and communication

The overall policy of the DLI is drawn at the Headquarters, which also has the responsibility of preparing technical advice and instructions and for setting inspection standards. Inspection standards are monitored at a first level by the head of each district office and at a second level by the Senior Labour Inspection Officer who is in charge of the Field Operations' Section at the headquarters.

The DLI draws up its annual strategy plan with quantitative and qualitative targets. Annual targets for each inspector include a minimum number of inspections, prosecution cases and letters to employers. On a monthly basis each inspector prepares a detailed weekly programme which includes inspections, at least two days per week.

Current reforms

Human Resources and career development

Permanency of inspectors

Labour Inspection Officers and Labour Inspectors are appointed on a permanent basis as members of the civil service personnel. However, in some cases, the MLSI employs Labour Inspectors with temporary (two-year) contracts.

Newly appointed inspectors are trained for six months in order to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. The training program is prepared, organized and ran by the Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre of the department and includes theoretical courses, the acquisition of skills and practical experience. Upon completion of the initial training at the headquarters of the department, the practical training of the newly appointed Inspectors continues either at the headquarters in the case of Labour Inspection Officers or at the District Offices in the case of Labour Inspectors with the on-the-job training. All newly appointed inspectors have to pass a written exam on the health and safety legislation within four years from the date of their recruitment.

Generally, inspectors can undergo supplementary training for specific tasks or for the development of individual skills. They can also attend courses, seminars and conferences organized by the MLSI or by other organizations. Inspectors are also given the opportunity to participate in study visits or other training programmes abroad and mainly in Europe.

Labour Inspection Officers are eligible for promotion to the post of Senior Labour Inspection Officer and to the Director of the Department of Labour Inspection. Labour Inspectors are eligible for promotion to the post of Labour Inspector 1st grade, Senior Labour Inspector and finally to the post of Principal Labour Inspector. Labour Inspection Officers and Labour Inspectors cannot be transferred to other departments or ministries, as they are permanently assigned to their posts within the DLI.

Selection Process and Background required

Recruitment qualifications for the post of Labour Inspection Officer and Labour Inspector are:

For Labour Inspection Officer: a university degree in engineering or Occupational Safety and Health and success in the public sector entry level examinations (written and oral).

For Labour Inspector: a higher (Tertiary Education) diploma in engineering, professional industrial experience of at least three years and success in the public sector entry examinations (written and oral).

In addition, candidates for both posts are assessed during interviews on various capacities such as team work, decision making, intuitiveness, analytical skills and integrity.

The selection process for Inspectors with temporary contracts is different from that of the permanent labour inspectors. In this case, the process is faster and the selection prerequisites are based only on academic diplomas and working experience of the candidates.

Visits and Functions

Types of visits

Inspectors can enter all premises where work is carried out without prior notice. The DLI has a computerized information system, which contains information on employers, undertakings, accidents, court cases, letters addressed to employers after an inspection, and details on inspections. In this way a risk rating system is applied, to enable the inspectors to evaluate the level of risk at each inspected workplace.

Proactive inspections are scheduled on the basis of the above rating system. The inspector can make an agreement with the employer for a period within which safety and health corrective action should be taken. This agreement is communicated through a letter to the employer or by issuing an "Improvement Notice". In

the cases where the health and safety of workers is at risk, the inspector can immediately issue a "Prohibition Notice". The inspector then visits the enterprise to check for compliance. If no accordance with the agreement is observed, he/she prepares a report and a draft prosecution file. This file is checked at headquarters and sent to the Public Prosecution Service.

In addition, reactive inspections are scheduled. Employers must immediately report fatal or serious accidents of their workers to the DLI. The inspector then investigates the circumstances of the accident by contacting the injured worker and/or his employer. This investigation is conducted over a telephone or by a personal visit. Employees or their representatives often submit complaints too. A full investigation follows and the inspector informs the complainant of the results.

Role of preventive measure

Inspectors provide information to employees, employers and other organized groups. In addition, they present lectures within the framework of occupational safety and health training programmes organized by the DLI in collaboration with representative partners or other Stakeholders. Posters, leaflets and guidelines on good practice are available, free of any charge, to employees and employers.

In general, inspectors work mostly proactively rather than reactively.

Programming

Each large district office (i.e. Nicosia and Limassol) is headed by a principal labour inspector and each small (that is Larnaca and Pafos) by a Senior Labour Inspector. The head of the district office manages all issues concerning the inspection activities in the area under his/her responsibility and is responsible for achieving the targets of his/her district which are set by headquarters.

Each district office has two different levels of inspectors based on their grade. Labour inspectors are in charge of all fieldwork inspection activities and investigation of accidents. The inspection of machinery such as boilers, lifts and cranes is carried out by 1st grade labour inspectors. Each district office is further subdivided into geographical areas and each inspector covers all aspects of work in his/her defined area. District Labour Inspectors are mainly generalists but they are specifically trained to handle special issues and to use simple instruments such as portable noise meters, heat-stress meters, sampling devices etc. They usually carry out their own preliminary workplace surveys for basic level investigations. In some cases, they are provided with support from the Labour Inspection Officers, who are based at the headquarters and who are specialists in engineering or industrial hygiene.

Registries and reporting of accidents /diseases at work

A monthly report is prepared by each district office and the data concerning inspection standards are loaded onto the computerized information system of the department. At the beginning of each month, the DLI sends a summary report of inspection activities carried out the previous month, together with the percentages of targets achieved, to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. Every year the MLSI publishes a general report with regards to the activities, statistics and new goals of each department on its' website.

The DLI has a good line of communication and cooperation with representative organizations of the employers and employees, the Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus, the local authorities, the Fire Brigade and other bodies. Moreover, the Department is now developing cooperation with the recently established Polytechnic School of the University of Cyprus on research, technical information and training issues related to health and safety at work.

Sanction and administration process

The national legislation provides inspectors the power to 1) enter all premises where work is carried out without prior notice, 2) carry out investigations on accidents or dangerous occurrences, 3) issue "Improvement Notices" imposing compliance requirements within a specific period of time, 4) issue "Prohibition Notices" prohibiting the use of the premises, plant or place of work or the carrying on of activities which may expose to serious risk the safety and health of the workers or/and the public, until the risk is eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level for the inspector, 5) conduct proceedings before a court of justice against employers or other persons responsible for any contravention of the provisions of the legislation, 6) request a court's order in relation to hazardous conditions and practices in order to prohibit the use of machines, plant or workplaces, until the risk is eliminated or/and impose compliance requirements.

Furthermore, the inspectors may send letters to the duty holders in which they explain the contraventions identified during an inspection and by which they require the employers to take corrective action within a specified period. Letters issued, in this context do not have a legal status of an "Improvement Notice".

Administrative fines are not provided for in the existing legislation.

Social dialogue and labour inspection

The Pancyprian Federation of Labour (**P.E.O**) is one of the main and active trade unions in Cyprus. Other important trade unions are the Cyprus Workers Confederation (**S.E.K**), the Pancyprian Federation of Turkish Trade Unions, the Pancyprian Union of Public Servants (**PASYDY**), the Pancyprian Organization of Greek Teachers (**POED**), the Organization of Greek Secondary Education Teachers (**OELMEK**), and the Union of Banking Employees of Cyprus (**ETYK**).

The Labour Advisory Board - a tripartite body of social dialogue plays till today a commanding role in the area of industrial relations and social dialogue till today, with its role also extending into some more general areas of labour and other employment issues.

ILO Conventions ratified

Cyprus ratified Convention no 81 in 1960 (ratified the protocol of 1955), Convention no 155 in 1989, but has not ratified Convention no 129.