



21.02.2018

# MISSION REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

following the Fact Finding Visit to Larnaca, Cyprus  
20-22 September 2017  
Committee on Petitions

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the PETI fact-finding visit to Cyprus on 20-22 September 2017 was to respond to a series of petitions received by the Committee concerning allegations of harmful industrial activities in the municipalities of Larnaca (particularly in the port of Larnaca) and Aradippou. The specifics of the allegations, as well their relevance to EU law under the Seveso Directives, are outlined in the annexed petition summaries<sup>1</sup> as well as in the Communication from the European Commission of 31 July 2017<sup>2</sup>.

The PETI delegation, chaired by Mr Pál Csáky (EPP), was composed of the following Members: Mr Miltiadis Kyrkos (S&D), Ms Angela Vallina (GUE), Mr Igor Šoltes (Greens), Mr Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE – ex-officio member) and Mr Demetris Papadakis (S&D – ex-officio member).

The visit consisted of a series of meetings of the delegation with the petitioners, Cypriot national authorities (both central and municipal), the Cypriot Parliament, the Auditor General and the Ombudsman.

The present report, intended as a response to Cypriot citizens' concerns raised in the petitions, contains the background to the dispute and a summary of the main findings of the delegation as acquired through the meetings held with the different stakeholders, and concludes with a set of recommendations based on these findings.

## 2. Background

### *a. The Port of Larnaca*

Located only six kilometres from Larnaca International Airport and next to 'Finikoudes', the largest and most frequented bathing beach used by locals and tourists alike, the Port of Larnaca is concentrated in a relatively small area in the town centre and surrounded by residential zones. It is the second largest port in Cyprus. Construction was completed in June 1973 and it became operational at the end of the same year.

Situated in an area of 445 000 square metres, it is now a multipurpose port handling all kinds of bulk consignments (animal fodder, grain, gypsum), conventional cargo (lumber, iron, fertilisers, automobiles) and petroleum products. In recent years, it has been used by cruise and passenger vessels, as well as by commercial shipping, and a yacht marina has also been developed at its southern end. For this reason, a strategic investor is being sought to ensure the uniform development of the port and the marina facilities. To this end, a call for tenders has been issued.

The port is also adjacent to petroleum and liquid gas installations that fall under the remit of the EU Seveso Directives<sup>3</sup> (concerning, e.g., procedures in response to major accident hazards involving dangerous substances). These installations, which extend to the north of the port for several kilometres, comprise gas and petroleum tanks located in the immediate vicinity of residences and businesses in the surrounding areas. Government plans to move these

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 1 to the present Working Document.

<sup>2</sup> Document PE572.924v04-00.

<sup>3</sup> Seveso-Directives: Seveso-I ([Directive 82/501/EEC](#)), Seveso-II ([Directive 96/82/EC](#)), Seveso-III ([Directive 2012/18/EU](#)).

installations away from Larnaca suburbs date back several decades, but have still not been implemented. Citizens' have expressed concerns and held protests, demanding their immediate relocation. As discussed below, this issue cannot be disconnected from the matters raised in the petitions, as there is an acknowledged need to provide an integrated solution that addresses both the issue of the relocation of the installations and the other questions raised by petitioners. In fact, the issue of the installations is the background against which the port issues have evolved. Even though the relevant petitions make only brief reference to the installations, the two issues are closely interlinked.

The exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in Cyprus date back to 2013. Two licencing rounds have resulted in the granting of rights to oil companies to undertake exploration drilling campaigns in the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Exploration rights were granted for a period of three years to three companies: ENI (Italy), Noble Energy (USA) and Total (France). MedServ Ltd, which has its seat in Cyprus, offers support services and provides expertise in natural gas drilling efforts for these activities. It has received a three-year licence to this end by the Cypriot Port Authority.

In June 2014 two heavy industrial units were installed for use by hydrocarbon extraction companies operating in the Cyprus EEZ, specifically ENI Cyprus Ltd, consisting of a liquid mud plant (LMP, a facility for producing and storing liquid mud for subsequent transport to the boreholes) and a chemical storage plant (for storing wet and dry chemical products). Both are located only 125 metres away from the nearest housing. ENI Cyprus Ltd has entrusted management of the liquid mud plant to Halliburton Mediterranean Company Ltd, and the chemical storage plant to Medserv Cyprus Ltd, which has also assumed responsibility for the overall running of the base.

Locals have objected vehemently to the construction and operation of these facilities, protesting in rallies, filing petitions before the EP Petitions Committee and complaints before the European Commission, and taking legal action (still pending) before local courts against the Government of Cyprus. Opposition has arisen in the municipal council and among large parts of the local population owing mainly to the fact that the logistics base was located at the centre of Larnaca, near residential areas and popular attractions and in an area promoted since many years for commercial and tourist development, but also to the fact that there was no prior public consultation on the operation of the port, nor any information given on the environmental and health impacts of the planned operations. A public meeting was subsequently organised in July 2014, with the presence of government officials and company representatives, aiming at informing concerned parties and easing protests. This meeting took place following the concerted reactions by residents and after the construction of the installations had already begun.

According to the mayor of Larnaca at the time, the Municipality of Larnaca was not consulted prior to the granting of the licences for the operation of these facilities on the premise that the Port of Larnaca in the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Larnaca, is owned by the Cyprus Port authority. The licences were granted directly by the Government and only became known to the municipality and the public after construction had begun and was nearing completion. It was only after the commencement of construction that the municipality commissioned a study on the environmental and socio-economic impact of the use of the port as a logistics base for offshore drilling explorations. All the same, the municipality was asked to grant extensions to the aforementioned temporary operation permits expiring in August 2016. At that time,

following protracted discussions in the municipal council, the extensions were refused. The refusal was based on the grounds that the activities in question posed potential health hazards given the proximity to residential areas and beaches, that they were incompatible with the urban plans for the area, and that the location of the companies' facilities was not in line with future town planning.

This notwithstanding, the Cyprus Port Authority subsequently extended the licences of Medserv Cyprus and Noble Energy until August 2017, though with the caveat that the companies were only permitted to use the areas in the port for storage and office use.

Hydrocarbon facilities in the port of Larnaca had been dismantled already before the fact-finding visit. ENI, which was operating in the port, had in 2015 already announced its intention to transfer its activities to the Port of Limassol. This was done, putting an end to all hydrocarbon-related activity in the Port of Larnaca, which had been the principal source of contention. However, notwithstanding the fact that all companies appear to have transferred their operations to the Port of Limassol, petitioners have expressed concern over the commencement of operations at the principal boreholes scheduled for autumn 2017, fearing a repeat of what occurred in 2014, when neither the municipal authorities nor the public were given any say in the direct licensing of companies by the Government. Even at the time of the PETI fact-finding visit, there were complaints of noise and emissions of pollutants from vessels in port involved in extraction activities, and repeated complaints over nightly activities in the port.

In July 2017 Medserv Cyprus received an extension of its contract. The company announced that ENI Cyprus Ltd had extended the contract for provision of operational base support services in Cyprus for another two years. The contract extension includes the provision of dedicated facilities and services in the Port of Limassol, though with base facilities in the Port of Larnaca maintained. Multimarine Services Ltd., which also supports the drilling operation, still maintains premises in the Port of Larnaca, though these are to be disposed of in the near future. The company has also stated that because of the cold weather of the season, workers can enter the building for rest, and coffee and lunch breaks.

A 2015 report from the Cypriot Ombudsman on the matter of the Larnaca port project identified numerous shortcomings in the decision-making process, including:

1. the lack of strategic planning to balance the profits and drawbacks of the project;
2. an inadequate public consultation that was limited to considerations of the economic impact, that did not extend to covering environmental and social implications despite the large-scale nature of the project, and that did not provide opportunities for citizen opinions to be heard, thereby violating the Aarhus Convention;
3. justified concerns by citizens with regard to an activity entailing high noise levels, possible radioactivity, and environmental degradation, at a short distance from residential areas;
4. the absence of permits required for such activity, despite its particular character and excluding the possibility of public consultation, entailing, as a consequence, 'an obscure, hasty and concerted procedure was followed by departments of the public sector to achieve the pinning of the development project in the Port of Larnaca,

irrespective of its character’.

A 2015 report by the Cypriot Auditor General found while that the competent ministry, department or service should obtain the views of the Director of the Town Planning and Housing Department, as the planning authority responsible, in matters concerning special government projects for which exemptions from the provisions set forth by the planning authority may be justified in the public interest, with the primary aim of ensuring the execution of projects of national or regional significance and the unhindered exercise of government development policy, decision-making authority rests with the Council of Ministers. According to the Auditor General report, therefore, all said constructions are illegal. At the same time, also according to the Auditor General, the position of the Ministry of Interior that no building permit is required for such development, as expressed in its letter to the Municipality of Larnaca, is not correct.

*b. Installations at Aradippou*

Two factories for the operations carried out by Halliburton and Schlumberger, respectively, have been erected in the Municipality of Aradippou (adjacent to Larnaca). They are pertinent to the issue of the Port of Larnaca since the sizeable facilities of the two companies were built to provide logistical support to the work to be carried out in connection with the drilling for natural gas (such as the processing of chemicals for the port of Larnaca or Limassol and facilities for cleaning drills). Halliburton will be drilling, cementing and completing ENI’s wells, while Schlumberger will be carrying out logging and testing. These facilities are about 7.5 km from the Port of Larnaca and approximately one kilometre from residential areas.

The plants were constructed in 2007-2008 on state-owned land (the former Larnaca Free Zone) leased to two other companies (engaged in other activities, e.g. construction of solar panels) at an extremely low price per square meter, qualifying as state aid in favour of these companies. Following an extension of the leases for an additional five-year period and the construction of the installations, the initial contractors subleased the facilities to Halliburton and Schlumberger respectively. However the rent for the sublease is at market prices, i.e. significantly higher than what the two initial contractors pay the Cypriot state for the lease. The current lessees had both informed the competent Ministry of their intention to use these facilities for services in support of drilling activities and for the processing of drilling products.

The plants were sited in an area at the time not classified as a heavy industrial zone: the installations in question are category A (heavy industrial plant), while the Aradippou municipal development plan provides only for category B installations (light industrial plant). The competent state authorities expressed concerns about this fact when the two companies notified their intent to the Cypriot government, and referred the decision for approval of this development to the Council of Ministers, which approved the exception in 2014. The state authorities then consented to the notification issued by the companies. Final approval for construction was given by the Aradippou municipal authority in 2014 following a heated discussion in the municipal council. Some time later, environmental impact assessment studies were issued, according which the impact of the operations were expected to be moderate, recommending certain measures to be taken.

Although developments at the time with regard to the Schlumberger and Halliburton companies were not covered by the provisions of the 2005-2014 legislation on impact assessment, a

number of meetings were convened for the assessment of project applications. These were attended by officials from the departments and local authorities concerned, including Aradippou and Dromolaxia, to whom invitations had been issued. In addition, the Department for the Environment raised a number of issues in writing during the operational and construction phases. However, no environmental impact assessment was carried out, since the Department for the Environment took the view that this was not a legal requirement and that the actions already taken were sufficient. Indeed, environmental specifications drawn up by the responsible government departments were duly incorporated in the construction plans by the companies concerned. According to the Department, no environmental problems have so far arisen. As admitted by the representative of Halliburton during a discussion on the matter at the Cypriot Parliamentary Committee of Environment on 10 September 2014, no permits for construction were acquired.

The Cypriot Ombudsman issued a report on the matter, clearly indicating that the activities of the hydrocarbon extraction sector, including those directly linked to support services for hydrocarbon exploration, verification and drilling operations, were, until recently, unknown in Cyprus. The administrative departments involved appeared unready to take any action to regulate the requisite operations. In her assessment, the Ombudsman deemed that public concerns were justified, in view of the operations necessary for the extraction of natural gas (for example, exploration, drilling, fracturing, the installation of land-based or offshore platforms, storage tanks, compressor stations, pipeline infrastructure, runoff basins, the storage and transport of hydrocarbons, processing prior to marketing), especially as regards the possible environmental impact on fauna, flora and human health.

In addition, the report confirmed that no public consultation took place, that the Municipality of Aradippou asked for two environmental impact studies only ex post, that there must have been a legislative loophole that allowed the provision of licences without previous environmental impact assessment studies, that there was no strategic plan for localisation, and that there are facilities that create increased public nuisance. The report determined that public debate was limited mainly to the possible financial and political benefits to the country of hydrocarbon drilling and exploitation, particularly in the wake of the financial crisis, while the environmental impact of the natural gas drilling operations did not receive the appropriate level of attention. Public scepticism was heightened by the decision to disregard the Larnaca development plan in examining the licence applications entered by the companies, dispensing with the more time-consuming public consultation procedure.

In view of the commencement of the main drilling in autumn 2017, the installation in Aradippou will play an important supporting role, e.g. with storage facilities for chemicals, repairs, etc.

A 2017 report on the matter by the Cypriot Auditor General described the background to the issue and the interaction between the Cypriot authorities and the two companies. It also underlined the fact that the competent authority had agreed to the conversion of the use of the facilities even before the authorisation had been granted by the Council of Ministers. It was also particularly critical of the change in the use of the facilities, of the state aid, and of the fact that the land was subleased at market prices to third companies without guarantees that the state receive a fair price in the initial lease.

### 3. Petitions

<i>Number</i>	<i>Title</i>
1540-14	by F. P. (Cypriot) on the establishment of an industrial port in Larnaca
1541-14	by Polyvios Orthodoxou (Cypriot) on environmental damage in Larnaca, Cyprus
1542-14	by Maria Theodorou (Cypriot) on Larnaca industrial port
1543-14	by Georgia Liopetriti (Cypriot) on Larnaca energy industrial port
1544-14	by Matheos Contarinis (Cypriot) on gas and oil tankers being moored off the city of Larnaca
1644-14	by Marika Nikolaou (Cypriot) on refuse in Larnaca
1662-14	by A. S. (Cypriot) on the conversion of the town centre port of Larnaca in Cyprus to a heavy industrial port without consulting local residents
1665-14	by Georgios Stamatis (Cypriot) on toxic waste and chemicals in Larnaca, Cyprus
1666-14	by Georgios Nikolaou (Cypriot) on the threat to the town of Larnaca in Cyprus from the construction of an industrial port in the town centre
1667-14	by Eugenia Moyseos (Greek) on the conversion of the port of Larnaca in Cyprus to an industrial port
1668-14	by Maria Voniati (Cypriot) on the construction of an industrial port in Larnaca, Cyprus
1829-14	by S. L. (Cypriot) on the destruction of Larnaca's natural environment
1830-14	by K. P. (Greek) on stopping pollution in Larnaca
0076-16	by Maria Papadopoulou (Cypriot) on behalf of LarnacaAct, on the creation of an industrial port in Larnaca, Cyprus and the alleged violations of European law
0144-16	by E.K. (Cypriot), on behalf of Citizens of Larnaca, Aradippou, Krassas, on the creation of an industrial port in Larnaca, Cyprus and the alleged violations of European law

Summaries of the above petitions are available in Annex 1 to this document.

The above petitioners protest about the conversion of the centrally located Port of Larnaca into a heavy industrial port to support the drilling for, and extraction of, oil and gas in the Cypriot EEZ. During drilling activities at the port, sludge and other large quantities of chemicals are transported and stored, radioactive metals and parts are allegedly shipped in and out, and dangerous explosives are sent to the oil and gas drilling platforms. The petitioners note that the

port is in an area that comes under the Seveso Directives, as oil and gas companies have erected facilities within several hundred metres of residential areas. The petitioners also voice their opposition to the decision to locate large warehouses in the area of Aradippou (on the outskirts of the town, less than a kilometre from the residential area) to store large quantities of explosives and chemicals, as well as radioactive elements, for the companies in the port. Petitioners express fears that the health and safety of residents and of the environment will be compromised through contamination of the soil, air and sea by leaking chemicals and radioactivity and by the risk of accident. The complaints also relate to the perceived change to the character of the town from that of a quiet tourist town to an industrial town. There have been intense citizens protests over the presumption that no environmental impact study was carried out for the works and that the citizens were not informed or consulted according to EU legislation. The companies active in the aforementioned facilities have requested an extension of their licence for activities within the Port of Larnaca; licences had been issued already for some of these activities.

With regard to Aradippou, petitioners claim that they only found out about the events after the decision to go ahead with the project had already been taken, and the facilities already constructed, even though none of the licences required by law had been issued and no environmental impact assessment conducted. In breach of the requirements set out the Aarhus Convention and in relevant EU legislation, no information was readily available to the public concerning the projects in their municipalities. The petitioners are of the view that no rational explanation has been provided as to why the authorities would choose to proceed with arrangements for which no proper risk assessment was carried out, and which citizens believe will endanger public health and the economy of a city, especially when more appropriate and logical alternatives are available. Petitioners assert that they have been deprived of their right to participate in decision-making processes and are still being kept uninformed about what is taking place in their neighbourhoods. There are particular concerns relating to possible radioactive emissions, as regards not only general public health, but also food safety, because the installations were erected next to food factories. They are also concerned about the fact that the transport of pipes and other material through the city of Larnaca, and on the main roads of Aradippou, to the installations will be noisy and environmentally burdensome to the area, which is predominantly residential. Petitioners have also underlined that, despite government promises that the potentially hazardous installations would be removed from the area, the construction of two more installations has been authorised and begun.

In response to the petitions, the Commission has issued four communications (see Annex 2). It found that on the basis of the available information, it has no reason to assume that EU environmental legislation is not being correctly applied in the framework of the applicable EU Directives. Furthermore, the Seveso Directives, which have been transposed into the national law of Cyprus, include important provisions on access to information, public participation in individual project decisions and on access to justice enabling citizens to ask for administrative or judicial review to challenge decisions, acts and omissions. In light thereof, the Commission invites the petitioners to seek a solution at national level, as national authorities are better placed and equipped to assess specific situations of non-compliance, and have the means appropriate to address the problem if the concerns are found justified. The petitioners are invited to exercise their rights under national procedures and means of redress. The Commission will not give further follow-up to these petitions.



#### **4. Summary account of meetings**

Wednesday, 20 September 2017

##### *Meeting with the Mayor of Larnaca, Mr Andreas Vyras*

After presenting the history and background to the Larnaca port issue, the Mayor informed the delegation that his office had not yet received a reply from the Port Authority of Larnaca concerning whether or not permits had been granted or renewed for the industrial activities at the port and, if so, under which conditions. He noted that he and the municipal council are relatively new in office (approximately eight months at the time of the visit), hence are not the same authority that refused to renew the companies' licences in 2016.

The Mayor briefed the delegation on the persisting issue of the storage tanks, which he described as a 'major problem' and the 'no.1 issue of the city', given their close proximity to an inhabited area. The Mayor commented that an estimated 60 % of Larnaca's population was potentially at risk from an eventual accident or fallout linked to the storage tanks, and referred to the applicability of EU legislation on industrial accidents (the Seveso Directives). The Mayor clarified that numerous authorities of the city had emergency plans in place, and that the removal of the tanks has been awaited since 2000, when the first removal decision was taken by central government authorities.

The Mayor also informed the delegation of the existence of a new energy centre known as the 'Cyprus Energy Station' with a port (in Vassilikos), which is located at a safe distance from inhabited areas and can provide alternative grounds for storage and industrial activities. According to information that the Mayor's office had received, the centre was scheduled for opening in March 2017, but no progress has been made as regards either the industrial activities at the Port of Larnaca or the storage tanks. The municipal council has subsequently initiated legal proceedings. The details of the scope and stage of these were not discussed, but the Mayor noted that the government has granted extensions to the companies owning the storage tanks (two years for natural gas storage, one year for petroleum storage). The Mayor also clarified that a Special Committee has been tasked with overseeing the removal process, but that, in his view, insufficient progress had been made to date.

Following the briefing by the Mayor, the Chair of the delegation enquired whether, in the Mayor's view, there had been sufficient information and cooperation in this matter between the municipal authorities and the government. The Mayor explained that the Port Authority was under government control and that, thus far, there had been communication gaps as regards information received on Larnaca port activities in particular.

##### *Meeting with petitioners, Larnaca Town Hall*

The delegation met with a group of petitioners, represented by Ms Maria Theodorou and Ms Eleni Kalli.

The petitioners gave a presentation on the current situation at the Port of Larnaca and in Aradippou, highlighting that company facilities belonging to Schlumberger, Total and ENI at both locations are still operational, notwithstanding the purported cessation of activity and removal and/or transfer decisions by the government. The petitioners also objected to the

classification of activities by the authorities as anything other than industrial, and referred to recent findings of water and noise pollution. The presentation was accompanied by a slideshow of photos taken by citizens of the affected locations, showing in particular the allegedly continuous around-the-clock industrial activity at the Port of Larnaca at the time of the visit, as well as the vicinity to residences.

In the view of the petitioners, the decision of the Port Authority of August 2013 to allow industrial operations at the Port of Larnaca contravened the Larnaca local plan and was taken without prior consultation of the citizens. In addition to recounting the main allegations raised in their petitions, the petitioners reiterated their concerns that the government's decisions with regard to the industrial developments at the Port of Larnaca and in Aradippou, as well as the postponement of the removal of the gas storage tanks, pointed towards a significant lack of strategy and transparency as regards the future development of the localities. The petitioners expressed their strong preference for a tourism-oriented future development of the Port of Larnaca and the surrounding region, rather than an industrial one. The citizens also expressed their renewed sense of dissatisfaction with the manner in which government authorities communicate on this issue with the citizens, and their belief that they are being misled on the matter.

Thursday, 21 September 2017

*Meeting with the Deputy Director of the Port of Larnaca and tour of the port*

The delegation was welcomed at the entrance of the port by a group of citizens who reiterated their grave concerns about the situation, their mistrust of government actions and inactions, and the pressing need to move the tanks away from the residences. The delegation then met with the Deputy Director of the Port and the Environmental Manager, in the presence of the Mayor of Larnaca. As regards the Port of Larnaca, in response to petitioners' claims asserting that industrial activity was continuing subsequent to the extension of licences, the Port Authority representatives stated that the port had been subject to 'cleaning activities' for the past two months, including, *inter alia*, the recycling of scrap metals.

As regards the questions raised by the Mayor's office concerning the extension of licences and the conditions thereof, the delegation was informed that the licences granted to Noble Energy and to Medserv Ltd were extended under the same conditions as when granted, and were intended to permit only storage activities.

In response to the petitioners' claims of noise and water pollution, the Environmental Manager stated that a 2016 study established very low noise pollution, customary for light industrial port activities, and that the last water sampling carried out in 2014 showed no signs of industry-related water pollution (in compliance with Cypriot legislation according to which water checks are carried out every three years). Regarding air pollution, the Environmental Manager stated that levels were higher in the city and that no additional air pollution emanating from industrial activities at the port had been recorded. Regarding radioactivity levels, a study carried out in 2014 by Halliburton (one of the oil companies licenced to operate at the port), and overseen by the Labour Inspection Department of the government, established very low findings of radiation. The delegation was informed that responses have been given to all related citizen queries.

As regards the Port of Limassol, the delegation was informed that an environmental impact

assessment was not necessary, given the type of activities in question. In this instance, surveillance programmes had been conducted prior to the granting of licences, and the public notified accordingly.

As regards the port of Vassilikos, which is under development, the representatives of the Port Authority informed the delegation that the site was intended to host more significant industrial activity, in addition to hosting a planned LNG terminal. However, the delegation was assured that all such activities would adhere to standard environmental limits applicable under EU law.

During the subsequent tour of the port by bus, the members of the delegation saw that there were some small office facilities and storage lots used by the companies, and that there was only one ship docked, on which there was no activity at the time of the visit. Members witnessed the vicinity of the port and of the tanks to the residences (literally across the street from houses and blocks of flats), the vicinity of the tanks to the port, as well as the fact that some of the tanks were located next to houses and businesses and on beaches next to swimmers.

*Meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works and other Ministry representatives*

As regards the Port of Larnaca, the Ministry representatives informed the delegation that the aim of the government was to develop Larnaca into a 'main cruise port' (as part of a 'fly & cruise' scheme) and to promote its marina, and that there was no governmental intention to transform the area into an industrial port. It was reiterated that the licences granted to the companies currently operating at the port were limited to storage purposes, whereas the main industrial port is to be developed at Vassilikos, with Limassol remaining the main commercial port of Cyprus.

The delegation was informed that the government plan was to move all activities concerned, including the gas storage tanks, to Vassilikos, and that the current status quo was not an acceptable situation. Incidentally, the delegation was also informed that the storage activities at the Port of Larnaca involved only the handling of non-hazardous materials and that, for this reason, no public consultation was required prior to the granting or extension of licences.

The Permanent Secretary also stated that the Cyprus Port Authority had financed an EIA study commissioned by the Larnaca municipal authorities and that the public had been fully informed thereof. According to the Ministry, the impression retained by certain citizens, that sludge production and other heavy industrial activities were taking place at the Port of Larnaca, was based on false assumptions and a lack of understanding. He also claimed that the only reason that the port space was rented was to boost employment and to counter the reduction in activity that the port was faced with, and that no licences were required for port operations because the latter were not harmful.

The Ministry representatives assured the delegation that greater efforts would be made in future to enhance cooperation and communication with the Mayor of Larnaca.

*Meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism*

The delegation met with representatives from the Hydrocarbons Department of the Ministry, who provided further background on the reasons for the expansion of the Port of Larnaca and the initial decision to grant licences for light industrial activities there for a term of two years

(from 2014 until 2016). According to the Ministry, at the time the decision was made by the Port Authority, Limassol's port was overcrowded, whereas Larnaca's was underutilised. As of 2016, Limassol has been designated port of transfer for the facilities currently located at Larnaca.

In addition, in 2016, following citizen protests, a public meeting was organised in Larnaca during which this background was explained and citizens' questions were answered. The Ministry representatives noted that during this exchange it became apparent that certain members of the public held erroneous beliefs as to the nature of the port activities and the materials handled, which according to the Ministry were largely non-hazardous (e.g. bentonite).

As regards the future relocation, the Ministry representatives admitted that there had been multiple postponements, as it is a complicated plan. Currently there is master plan in implementation for Vassilikos, where infrastructure is being created and areas have been granted to companies previously active in Larnaca; the plans are quite advanced, as the first town-planning permit for the relocation of the facilities has been granted.

With regard to Aradippou, they mentioned that the government authorities have granted the companies exceptions on the condition that they receive all the necessary licences. The Municipality of Aradippou has granted construction licences following the EIA study. As to future oil and natural gas prospecting plans, drilling in block 11 was completed at the time of the visit. A further three blocks are to be awarded, while the current contractor is to drill two wells in the new block in the autumn of 2017, and Exxon Mobil (in block 10) to drill two exploration wells in the second semester of 2018. Halliburton (contractor to Total) and Schlumberger will be offering supporting services in Aradippou.

#### *Meeting with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior*

The delegation met with representatives of the Town Planning Authority and was informed that the planning parameters for the Port of Larnaca are contained in the Larnaca town plan, which does not permit industrial port activities. As regards the location of the gas storage tanks, the Ministry informed the delegation that a Ministerial Order decreed the termination and removal of these tanks in February 2017. Consequently, the deadline for the transfer of the tanks is March 2018 for those containing petroleum gas, and March 2019 for those containing LPG. Both types of tanks are intended to be transferred to Vassilikos; however, according to the Ministry representatives, a delay of one to two years is likely.

Regarding the relocation of the tanks from the area extending from the port to Oroklini, the Authority has been preparing a broader plan for this area, which was underdeveloped owing to the presence of the tanks. The plan aims to upgrade the area through qualitative planning, with new roads, cycle paths, a promenade, management of water streams, multifunctional buildings in central areas, and businesses and residences in neighbourhoods. A firm has been hired to carry out the above detailed study and public consultation events have already been held. The new plan was expected to be published by the end of 2017, at the same time as the EIA for this project was due to be published under the guidance of the Department for the Environment.

In the representatives' view, no permits were required for the construction of the installations at the port, as the request had been submitted by the Ministry of Transport, not by a private firm. Nevertheless, all the procedures were observed and opinions from authorities were given as if the request had come from a private company, so there was no violation of the law. Finally,

with regard to Aradippou, after presenting the procedure that was followed, they expressed the view that there is pressure to turn Aradippou into an exclusively residential area, this being the reason for the citizens' protests.

*Meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (Department of the Environment) and with the Commissioner for the Environment*

The representatives initially apologised for the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, who had been called away on business and could not be present at the meeting. The delegation was informed that, as regards the development of auxiliary activities in Aradippou, the Aradippou town plan permits industrial uses and industrial zone functions. The other uses permitted under the town plan include storage (of auxiliary/support equipment) and workshops/processing stations. According to the law no environmental permit was required; nevertheless, the Department asked for all the environmental data that was relevant to their operations, as well as exploring all possible risks on the basis of information given by the companies, and then imposed very strict environmental terms and monitoring. They claimed that the two facilities are in operation and are in fact in full compliance with the terms imposed on them. The Ministry also informed the delegation that, in terms of informing the public, its technical experts held presentations, provided explanations, and met twice with the Aradippou City Council before issuing of the licences.

The delegation was also informed that, as regards the Port of Larnaca, the activities undertaken did not fall within the definition of industrial activities under the applicable legislation, and therefore no environmental impact assessment was required. Nevertheless, the Department required very stringent terms and imposed very close monitoring during the operation of the port in 2014, in order to grant its approval. Owing to the proximity to residences, they measured noise levels and monitored the working hours. As the operations were to last only 18 months, they gave their approval, and then monitored noise levels and waste management on the platforms and found everything in compliance. Since then, there has been no further request for approval. Furthermore, in the view of the Ministry, none of the activities at the Port of Larnaca fall within the scope of the Seveso Directives, whereas the opposite is true for the area of Larnaca in which the gas storage tanks are located – a risk analysis is being carried out under the remit of the Cypriot Ministry of Employment.

Regarding the relocation of the tanks to Vassiliko, the delegation was informed that the first company that received a construction permit has already erected tanks and is continuing to do so to cover also the initial needs of the other companies that will relocate there. The relocation was characterised as a 'very time-consuming process', for which serious and extensive environmental studies are in progress and for which many bureaucratic obstacles need to be cleared beforehand.

*Meeting with the Auditor General, Audit Office of the Republic of Cyprus*

The Auditor General reiterated the commitment of the Cypriot Government that Limassol is to remain the major commercial port in Cyprus, and that this is proof that the Port of Larnaca is not meant to be industrial – at the time, provisions were made to allow industrial use in Limassol.

The delegation was informed that, as regards the transfer of the gas tanks, there is a political issue of indirect influence and pressure being exerted by the operating companies on the state

authorities. The Auditor General gave an example as regards the provision of certain materials, namely bitumen, where a quasi-monopoly exists in the market. The office of the Auditor General stated that it is trying to engage other companies in order to foster a private-sector initiative aligned with the removal process.

As regards procedures for granting licences, the Auditor General clarified that two types of relevant permits exist under Cypriot law: urban planning/zoning permits and construction permits. If a project is being developed by a private company, a construction permit is required, which is granted by the municipality, even if the company is building on state-owned land. The office of the General Prosecutor is responsible for clarifying the interpretation of the law on procedures for granting permits and licences. A derogation procedure exists, especially where projects of national importance are concerned and when a change in the use of land and facilities will be required.

*Visit to the Cypriot Parliament – Joint meeting of the Committee for Transport, Communications and Works and of the Committee for Environment*

The Delegation met with a joint delegation of Members of the Cypriot Parliament, comprising the Chair of the Committee for Environment Dr Adamos Adamou, and Ms Annita Dimitriou (Democratic Rally – DHSY) and Ms Evanthia Savva (AKEL), both of whom are members of the above Committee, and Members of the Committee for Transport, Communications and Works Mr Christakis Giovannis (Progressive Party of Working People – Left – New Forces – AKEL), Mr Dimitris Dimitriou and Mr Charalambos Theopemptou (Vice-President, Greens). Larnaca is the constituency of almost all of the above Members.

The Delegation was informed that the issue of the Port of Larnaca has been discussed in several parliamentary committees. DHSY representatives expressed their disagreement with the petition titles, as no state decision was ever made to turn Larnaca into an industrial port. The port already existed in 1974, when the Turkish invasion took place, and the areas around it were offered as residential areas to house some of the refugees from northern parts of the island. Technically, therefore, the houses surrounded the port. The DHSY representatives considered that the complaints originated from only a small proportion of citizens. The unemployment rate in Larnaca after the bank deposit haircut of 2013 was very high, so it was decided to allow such activities in the port (which had already experienced a great decrease in activity due to the economic crisis) to boost employment in the area. They also highlighted that three offers were received in the tendering procedure for the development of the Larnaca tourist port and the marina, and that the contractor would be selected by the end of 2017. As for the relocation of the petroleum tanks in the northern part of the port, a decision has been taken already and will be implemented, as the funds are available and the European Union has approved this relocation. The move of the gas tanks appears to be slightly more complicated, as the Cypriot market is small and the cost of the relocation is too high for the companies involved. In the opinion of the DHSY representatives, citizens could have participated and could have been informed about the plans for the port via the Larnaca Development Committee. Finally, they consider that citizens' concerns regarding the Port of Larnaca are unfounded, as the Government has irrevocably decided not to allow the port to be used as it was in 2014, and will permit only storage in the port.

AKEL members said that the citizens of Larnaca acknowledge the need to boost employment in the area but do not consider that putting human lives at risk is the right means to achieve this.

Their aim is to develop tourism alongside compatible commercial development, but they consider that their city is already burdened and at risk due to the tanks, the electrical installations, the industrial zone and the airport. In their view, the government has not irrevocably decided to move the companies out and away from the Port of Larnaca – their decision having been postponed until 2019 – while at the same time it is not known exactly when the companies will move out, when the tanks will be relocated and when the plans will be implemented. As far as the installations in Aradippou are concerned, Ms Savva, who was a member of the Aradippou municipal council at the time the construction permits were granted to the two companies in 2014, stated that there was a concerted, obscure effort by the government and the mayor of Aradippou to pin the location of the plants close to a residential area. As proof of this, she stressed that the companies received their permits in a few months, whereas procedures usually take two to three years; the Council of Ministers gave a derogation to private firms, whereas derogations are usually granted only for state projects; and finally, the Municipality of Aradippou scheduled their council meeting and awarded the permits to the company earlier, in order to present a *fait accompli* when the competent Parliament committee was convened two days later.

Friday, 22 September 2017

*Visit and tour of the Municipality of Aradippou*

The delegation toured the municipality of Aradippou by bus, accompanied by the Mayor of Aradippou, who provided a commentary on the main sites visited. These sites included two support facilities for drilling companies (Halliburton and Schlumberger), both of which were closed and did not appear to be populated. Both facilities were erected in a business park (former Larnaca free zone) on the outskirts of Aradippou, close to a highway that separates the park from the residential areas. The Delegation was informed that these two installations were not and never have been in operation. The construction of the gold refinery had not yet been completed.

The distance of the facilities from the residential areas varies, as these areas have only recently been inhabited; in fact, there were several residence construction sites in progress. However, the average direct distance is approximately one kilometre.

*Meeting with the Mayor of Aradippou, Mr Evangelos Evangelidis*

The delegation was informed that, as regards the procedure for issuing permits, a municipality is obliged to follow state-issued opinions and issue a permit accordingly. If a municipality diverges from a positive opinion issued by the state, the municipality bears the burden of proof and must provide a reasoned opinion as well as possible indemnity payments. State authorities, not municipal authorities, conduct environmental assessments.

The mayor confirmed that the land owners in the area would like the land to be for residential use only; land use is decided by the council of land owners, while the Department for Town Planning has the final say. As regards the timing of the citizen protests and petitions (the citizens protesting were allegedly not from Aradippou but from Larnaca), the delegation was informed that the majority of these occurred right before the municipal elections, and that a ‘small minority of citizens dominated the whole issue’, whose claims were at times ‘exaggerated’, and that the extent of the protests was blown up through social media.

Finally, the delegation was informed that the Larnaca local plan is reviewed every seven years, the most recent one dating back to 2013. The citizens propose changes to the plan, the municipality checks these and issues an opinion, and the Department of Town Planning makes the final decision. In the most recent review, the municipality had proposed that there be a buffer zone between the installations and the residential areas, even though Department studies supported the view that the creation and operation of an industrial zone was possible.

*Meeting with the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman)*

The Ombudsman informed the delegation that the main citizen complaints had been resolved and had received a response. This resolution has ultimately resulted in the change of the Larnaca development plan.

As regards Aradippou, the development of auxiliary activities and a mud plant have been halted and will be transferred to Vassiliko. Only storage activities will remain in Aradippou; no processing or operational activities will take place there in future, or any other activities which could be harmful to the environment. The Office of the Ombudsman has received no new complaints on this issue.

As regards the issue of information dissemination and communication gaps by the state and municipal authorities, the Ombudsman recognises that there have been shortcomings on all levels, which exacerbated the situation; however, her office has not received any complaints specifically on this issue. As to why there were such irregularities in the procedures followed, which gave citizens the wrong impression, it was her view that an initial assessment of the role that the port could play was carried out, but this assessment was later revised and any industrialisation of the port was halted.

*Meeting with petitioners, Larnaca Town Hall*

The second meeting with the petitioners consisted of an exchange between the delegation and the citizens on the main outcomes of the meetings attended by the delegation and the provision of additional information by certain citizens to the delegation.

The petitioners confirmed that there is a pending lawsuit before the Supreme Court of Cyprus by the municipalities of Larnaca and Dromolaxia. The petitioners also pointed to the upcoming 2018 rezoning exercise for the island (which includes, among other things, a review of the Larnaca local plan) and expressed concerns that the government will ‘resort to requisitions’ of land for industrial purposes.

As regards the removal and transfer of the gas storage tanks, the petitioners recognised that there was a Ministerial Order in place but emphasised that there have been repeated extensions and delays, for as long as 17 years.

As regards the overall issue of a lack of communication, the petitioners claimed that this has been an ongoing problem and that there have been numerous instances of conflicting and/or misleading information provided at all levels of government and across different ministries. It was also mentioned that certain mayors even try to prove that protesting citizens are wrong, ignorant or mentally unstable. The petitioners doubt that the companies would only be using the port for storage, and even if this were so, it would be very hard to prove, as there are only



one or two state controllers to perform the necessary checks. They also referred to companies finding ways to bypass the government decisions and permits and the citizens' protests, for example by performing actions that cause disturbances and possibly emissions on the ships docked in the port rather than on port grounds.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The first point that was established during the visit was the **citizens' discontent with the prolonged lag in communication** by central government authorities as regards the developments at the Port of Larnaca, Aradippou, and the situation of the gas storage tanks. **Tensions and miscommunication, or a complete lack of communication, were evident, both between the Larnaca Municipality and the Cyprus Port Authority and between the Municipality and the residents of Larnaca.** Proof of the former can be found in the fact that the Mayor of Larnaca only learned of the extension of the licences for storage in the Port of Larnaca during the meeting of the PETI delegation with the Port of Larnaca authorities. At the same time, **the commitments made by central government authorities to engage in greater dialogue and more transparent communication with both citizens and municipal authorities** as regards future urban and industrial developments are welcome.

The environmental rights recognised for citizens today stem from a wide range of environmental principles and laws that have been adopted at global and EU level. Adopted in 1992, the Rio Declaration stresses in Principle 10 that 'environmental issues are better handled with the participation of all interested citizens.' In 1998, this Principle became operational with the signing of the Aarhus Convention<sup>1</sup>, which entered into force in 2001 and was ratified by Cyprus in 2003. The rights of the public to access environmental information, to participate in decision-making and to have access to justice are the three pillars of the Aarhus Convention and the States Parties to the Convention are obliged to secure and respect these rights. In the present case, this Principle appears to have been violated, and the lack of proper EIAs for such projects (Port of Larnaca and Aradippou) suggests that either the Cypriot national legislation has been circumvented or its transposition does not comply with EU legislation.

**Citizens' participation, public consultation and the provision of necessary information on future development plans in a timely fashion**, i.e. before the intervention/construction begins, is not a luxury that governments cannot afford but is an obligation and also a part of the EU acquis. The mistrust of any government or local decision, even of favourable decisions that vindicate the opposition of citizens to the use of the Port of Larnaca, is a result of the poor handling of information by the government and the local authorities and possibly a factor exacerbating tensions in the area and within the Larnaca municipal council.

Another observation was **the apparent lack of coordination and procedural oversight between different government departments and services as regards the authorisation processes** for industrial and urban development schemes, and the resulting situation of proximity of certain industrial installations to residential areas, which would not normally comply with modern zoning laws nor with EU legislation as provided by the Seveso Directives; at the same time, **the divergent accounts given by different central government authorities** on individual points related to decision-making processes and the requirement for licences

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<sup>1</sup> Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

regarding the said developments was striking.

The **lack of strategic planning at government level** relating to such an important issue as oil and gas prospecting also became evident during the meetings, proven indicatively by the fact that the industrial use of a port such as Larnaca was preferred for short-term gains, but this industrial activity was then moved to Limassol, while the facilities for the supporting services remain in Aradippou, near Larnaca.

**Development of an area should not only entail financial gain, but should at the same time ensure protection of the environment and of public health**, and a balance between both aspects should always be sought. The particularities of the present case, where a port is located literally in a residential area, make this point even more important. At the same time, the **importance of public interest as a means of progress and environmental protection** is particularly highlighted in the case of the Port of Larnaca.

During the discussions between the delegation and the authorities, even though they were not held at ministerial level, and after the visit to the port, **the authorities clearly stated that they have no intention of continuing the industrial use of the Port of Larnaca**, and that the use of the port is currently only authorised for the limited purposes (such as storage) indicated by the Cyprus Port Authority. Petitioners remain concerned, however, about whether there are ongoing dangerous operations within the harbour, as has been the case in the past, whether an adequate licence has been granted for these operations and, finally, whether they are properly controlled. The latest renewal of the licence was done by letter from the Cyprus Port Authority addressed to the Municipality of Larnaca on 21 September 2017, namely on the day of the meetings that the PETI delegation had with the Port Authority. Petitioners remain sceptical, however, about the firmness of the decision that the port is to be used only for storage, as it is not clear what would be stored there (chemicals and dry and liquid waste are stored in the Port of Limassol, meaning that this could also be the case for the Port of Larnaca) and for what period the extension was granted.

Concerning the Aradippou area, it seems that service operations have been permitted without an ex ante EIA in an area that does not hold the necessary classification for them. This seems to have been made possible through certain legal engineering in relation to public-private involvement. The local authorities' real capacity to properly inspect the nature of the operation actually taking place appears to be a concern as well.

Finally, even though the issue of the relocation of the gas and oil tanks from Larnaca, which entail an evident danger according to the Seveso Directives, was not the main focus of the petitions examined during this visit, **the need to relocate them was evident and pressing**, as is the commitment to a final time frame and clear communication to citizens from the state authorities. The relocation to Vassiliko appears to be a solution, despite its complicated nature. It remains unclear to the delegation whether this is a short- or medium-term plan, how soon it can be implemented and the degree of certainty of its implementation.

In view of the above findings, the Committee on Petitions makes the following recommendations to the competent national authorities:

1. Notes the particular importance of real, enhanced public dialogue when proposed industrial or urban development projects have a potential public health impact or pose a risk for the environment; underlines the importance of public dialogue in the frame of

better preparation of government decisions; proposes to this end that a joint meeting be held between the Port Authority, the relevant ministries, the Ombudsman, the Auditor General and the petitioners;

2. Recommends the involvement and consultation of the city council, through a public dialogue process, in all projects or activities which significantly affect the port, even though port authorities fall within the remit of the central government, so as to ensure citizens' awareness;
3. Urges the competent authorities to expedite the process of removing the gas storage tanks and recalls that the removal decisions have been pending as far back as 17 years; calls on the competent authorities to communicate a precise time frame for the end-point of the removal process to citizens and the affected municipal authorities;
4. Requests that the competent authorities clarify the terms of the recent renewal of the licence for the facilities at the Port of Larnaca, and particularly the nature of operations allowed; strongly encourages addressing the lack of work inspection to verify whether dangerous operations are taking place without control or the necessary permission, both in the Port of Larnaca and Aradippou;
5. Recommends increased transparency and greater disclosure of information to citizens as regards future development strategies for the Port of Larnaca, Aradippou and other pertinent areas, as well as greater transparency regarding the type of activities, materials and time spans involved in these strategies;
6. Urges government authorities to become involved in interdepartmental dialogues on the processes and procedures to be followed in the context of oil and gas prospecting, ultimately leading to the creation of a Strategic Plan on the matter; notes the need to move from a short-term partial logic of immediate economic turnover towards comprehensive strategic long-term planning for the development of the coast in Larnaca, focusing on local economic activities and tourism in line with the environmental protection regulations;
7. Is concerned that under current legislation the activities in both the Port of Larnaca and Aradippou did not require an independent EIA, when a study including alternative solutions is the norm; considers that the law transposing the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive has either been circumvented or is itself too weak and does not comply with the aim of the EU directive; urges, in this case, that this legislation be revised in order to properly update and upgrade it; suggests that a clear distinction be made between public and private interests in projects and between the concrete type of industrial activities permitted and forbidden in zones with different classifications;
8. Recommends the introduction of more stringent contracting processes for environmental risk assessment studies; notes that this is appropriate in terms of both securing greater trust from citizens in governmental decision-making on environmentally sensitive issues and avoiding potential conflicts of interest when corporations or private organisations otherwise involved in the development of a project or investment are funding the study themselves or funding the entity from which the study has been commissioned;

9. Stresses the importance of complying with the provisions of the Seveso Directives, including drawing up comprehensive plans for civil protection and duly informing the population concerned of the evacuation protocols in case of emergency, particularly in Larnaca, taking into account the proximity to houses of both the tanks and the port, and given certain operations identified therein;
10. Welcomes the increased prioritisation of environmental matters on the Cypriot political agenda; believes that further cultural change is still needed, whereby decisions are not made beforehand and loopholes then found to avoid the rules on public information and participation; considers that the upcoming comprehensive review of the soil zoning on the island in 2018 is a good opportunity to implement such a change of approach;
11. Recalls the need for Member States to respect the 1995 Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, and all the protocols thereto, in particular the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM);
12. Notes the observations made in the reports by the Cypriot Ombudsman and the Cypriot Auditor General regarding irregularities in the procedures followed for the use of the Port of Larnaca and the installations in Aradippou and the impact that these development projects had or would potentially have on local citizens; urges government authorities to take into account the points raised in the aforementioned reports and comply with any recommendations contained therein;
13. Commits to monitoring citizens' calls for action as regards future developments concerning the Port of Larnaca, Aradippou and the removal of the gas storage tanks, should these proceed in a manner contrary to the plans presented by the national authorities during the fact-finding visit; in the same light, reminds petitioners that they can always submit new petitions to the European Parliament on the matter, if objective reasons justify such a course of action, which the Committee on Petitions will examine and then take action on, if necessary.

## **Annex 1: Summary of the petitions received**

### **Summary of petition 1540/2014**

The petition objects to the establishment of an industrial port in Larnaca. The petitioner considers that the project is in conflict with the Seveso Directive.

### **Summary of petition 1541/2014**

The petitioner complains about works being carried out in the port and areas surrounding Larnaca and requests that all the oil and gas tanks be moved, that work in the port to facilitate oil and gas exploration be stopped, that the Aarhus and Seveso 2 and 3 rules be applied and that an independent environmental impact study be carried out for each project, translated into Greek and published in the press.

### **Summary of petition 1542/2014**

The petition strongly objects to the development of an industrial port in the residential areas of Larnaca, on the grounds that it poses a health and safety hazard to residents and is harmful to the environment.

### **Summary of petition 1543/2014**

The petition concerns an objection to the decision by the Cyprus government to build an industrial port for the use of Larnaca energy without consulting residents. The petition considers that the process is in breach of the Aarhus Convention as well as EU environmental regulations. Only a preliminary study on the matter has been carried out, which in no way addresses the environmental and health impacts of the project.

### **Summary of petition 1544/2014**

The petition protests against gas and oil transport vessels being moored off the city of Larnaca, in front of its sandy beaches and near residential areas. There is already a government order to move the vessels but this order is not being observed. The vessels pose a serious environmental hazard and are in breach of the Seveso Directive.

### **Summary of petition 1644/2014**

In her very brief petition, the petitioner asks for waste not to be transported to Larnaca.

### **Summary of petition 1662/2014**

The petitioner protests about work being carried out in the town centre port of Larnaca to convert it to a heavy industrial port. He complains that there are plans to carry out work to produce drilling sludge, use and store large quantities of chemicals, ship radioactive metals and parts in and out and send dangerous explosives to the oil and gas drilling platforms. He also notes that the port is in an area that comes under the Seveso Directive, as oil and gas companies have erected facilities within several hundred metres, and voices his opposition to the decision to locate large warehouses in the area of Aradippou (on the outskirts of the town less than a kilometre from the residential area, just 700 m from the nearest houses) to store large quantities of explosives and chemicals and store, use and move radioactive elements for the companies in

the port. He expresses fears that the health and safety of residents and of the environment will be compromised from contamination of the soil, air and sea from leaking chemicals and radioactivity or possible accidents and complains about the change to the character of the town from a quiet tourist town to an industrial town. He calls for works to stop and for an impact study to be carried out for the town and surrounding area.

#### **Summary of petition 1665/2014**

In his very brief petition, the petitioner calls for toxic waste and chemicals not to be allowed in Larnaca in Cyprus.

#### **Summary of petition 1666/2014**

In a very brief petition, the petitioner states that industrial activities are prohibited in the town centre, especially activities in connection with drilling for gas. He condemns that the greed of a few threatens to poison the residents of Larnaca.

#### **Summary of petition 1667/2014**

The petitioner complains that the Cypriot government has started to convert the town centre port of Larnaca to an industrial port, without consulting or informing the local residents. The plans include setting up a factory to produce sludge for gas drilling and for explosives to be transported through the centre of town to the port. She also states that no environmental impact study was carried out for the works.

#### **Summary of petition 1668/2014**

The petitioner objects to the construction of an industrial port in a residential area in the centre of Larnaca within a short distance (less than 100 metres) of homes, as it will put the health and safety of the residents and the environment at risk.

#### **Summary of petition 1829/2014**

In an extremely short text, the petitioner, who resides in Larnaca, asks for the destruction of the natural environment to stop, in order for people to be able to live freely in a clean environment.

#### **Summary of petition 1830/2014**

In an extremely short text, the petitioner, who resides in Larnaca, asks for environmental pollution to stop.

#### **Summary of petition 0144/2016**

The petitioner is expressing her frustration about the lack of response from the European Commission to a complaint submitted more than one year ago against the government of Cyprus, reporting breaches of Community law regarding environmental protection and citizens' safety from heavy industry installations in the Larnaca Port. This was done with total disregard for health, zoning, the environment, law and process. These constitute utter violations of human rights and the Aarhus Convention. The citizens have also taken local legal action which is pending. In the meantime, the situation appears to deteriorate further as the risk to the residents

is greater, and recently two more factories emerged in the same area, a gold refinery and a bio-energy plant. The citizens consider this to be proof of the efforts of the central and local government to convert the area illegally into a heavy industry zone. She underlines that time is of the essence, and asks for the immediate intervention of the EU.