

# Policy and Legal Recommendations in the Republic of Cyprus

As a result of the previous gap analysis, the plastic hotspot assessment and the stakeholders' consultation, we will hereafter provide a series of recommendations.



## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### Economic instruments and Incentives for waste prevention

Separate collection of packaging waste is relatively effective as the recycling rate is increasing. However, there is a lot of scope for improvement. Notably, it is fundamental to improve the functioning of extended producer responsibility systems, in line with the general minimum requirements on EPR.<sup>1</sup> The Extended Producer Responsibility scheme requires reform, including extension to plastic waste streams. A good start was an obligation to set up an EPR on non-packaging paper that entered into force in 2017. Therefore, it is fundamental to adopt legal provisions that will foresee:

- Establishment of extended producer responsibility (EPR) in streams other than packaging waste, such as plastics;
- Establishment of the landfill taxes to phase-out landfilling of recyclable and recoverable waste;
- Ban of certain waste streams from disposal in landfills.

### Waste segregation and recycling in municipalities

Cyprus is very low on recycling rates, with only 7-10% of the materials produced being recycled which is very far away from the 50% target of 2020.<sup>2</sup> Also, 10 out of the 59 infringement cases at the EU Level against the Republic of Cyprus include waste management policies, actions against plastic and failure to provide solutions to reduce waste production. This alarmingly low percentages show how the public of Cyprus is highly dependent on plastic, and that recycling cannot be the solution, but that stakeholders (authorities, NGOs, universities) need to work on solutions to remove plastic pollution at source.

It is important to reform the current Waste Management Law and include the following provisions:

- Role and responsibilities of local authorities in separate waste collection and recovery/recycling;
- Mandatory segregation at source for citizens (PAYT schemes);

<sup>1</sup> Set out in Directive 2008/98/EC as amended by Directive (EU) 2018/851

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, The EU Environmental Implementation Review 2019, Country Report - CYPRUS

- Minimum service standards for separate collection (e.g. frequency of collections, types of containers, etc.) in municipalities;
- Mandatory recycling targets for municipalities with penalties for non-compliance (e.g. fines);
- Support programmes for municipalities to help them implement separate collection policies and improve recycling rates;

- Co-create new value chains using plastic waste and increased incentives for recycling.

Alternatively, it would be crucial to create a new specific legal instrument for plastic waste disposal.

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

### Capacity building for local authorities

The local authorities are key players in waste management, especially in relation to separate waste collection. The whole success of the system relies upon the performance of the local authorities in delivering services, and encouraging households to engage with them. Hence, it is critical for them to have the necessary technical and financial resources to deliver. The Waste Management Plan foresees some support for local authorities in their new responsibilities by MARDE (which will be responsible for the implementation of the training activities and will collaborate with the Union of Municipalities and Communities, NGOs, Universities, etc.). This support is urgently needed and will have to be very closely monitored, while sufficient funds should be available. It is important to:

- Provide resources (know-how, training, collection equipment, etc.) to the local authorities for the development of separate collection systems;
- Develop and implement training and capacity building programs;
- Develop new job opportunities at local community level relating to plastic waste management.

### Waste management infrastructure

The most significant measures that will allow the implementation of the proposed policy and reaching of the respective targets include:

- Construction of a new sanitary landfill in Nicosia;
- Completion of the green points network in all districts;

- Finalization of the closure and rehabilitation of all the last non-compliant landfills;
- Improvement of national technical capacity for recycling or incineration.

### Private sector involvement

- Develop incentive programs for the private sector to enhance the current waste management and utilization infrastructure. These incentive programs will refer to:
  - Support new or existing waste recovery units in order to be developed, upgraded or expanded
  - Support industries to incorporate secondary products (recovered recyclables) in their process line
  - Support industries in implementing waste prevention and separate collection within their process
- Promote and implement voluntary environmental agreements with public sector and public-private partnerships for waste prevention activities, separate collection activities, preparation for recycling, development of guideline for good practices, etc.

### Tourism sector

- Implement Oceanic hospitality standards<sup>3</sup> to reduce plastic usage in bars, restaurants and hotels;
- Improve port (aviation and maritime) reception facilities for waste segregation, removal and recovery;
- Design and test zero-plastic ecotourism packages that completely eliminate plastics from the supply chain and educate visitors about their own responsibility related to use of plastics.

<sup>3</sup> <https://oceanic.global/oceanic-standard/>