

Waste Management

Packaging Waste Management Plan

(a) Attainment of recovery and recycling targets. Article 6 of the National Laws of 2002 to 2006 on packaging and packaging waste determines that by 31.12.2005 at least 50% of the weight of packaging waste should be recovered, as per the European Parliament and Council Directive 94/62/EC. According to the report prepared by the Department of Environment for the year 2008, the total percentage of actual recovery of packaging waste was 34,3%, compared to 25,9% in 2007. It has been noted that the recovery and recycling rates of paper, metal and wood are at satisfactory levels, whilst the cause for not meeting the overall target is the continually low recovery and recycling rate for plastic and glass packaging.

We have suggested that the Department of Environment promotes the placement of recycle bins in large governmental buildings and circulates a relevant instructions memo to all government services.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment (MANRE) informed us that the Department has collected 183 recycle bins that were used in the state recycling programme run during 2006-2008, and has prepared a draft proposal to the Council of Ministers regarding their placement in public services, schools, military camps, etc.

(b) Transfer of the provisions of Directive 2004/12/EC and of Decisions 2005/20/EC and 2005/270/EC to National Law. As is described in depth in our previous Reports, the notification procedure prescribed in article 16(1) of Directive 94/62/EC was not followed in the case of the Packaging and

Packaging Waste (Amendment) Law of 2006 (No. 48(I)/2006), which was enacted for the purpose of harmonising the national legislation with the Directive and the Decisions of the European Commission, which are referred to above.

A draft Bill was prepared by the Department of Environment, however its notification to the Commission by the Cyprus Organisation for the Promotion of Quality, which is defined in the relevant national Law as the competent body, was delayed for over a year. Due to the delay, it became necessary to draw up a new draft bill, which, following the process of public consultation was sent to the Attorney General for legal review, which is still in progress. As a result, the obligation of the Republic of Cyprus to transpose the community legislation referred to above into national law is still not met.

Hazardous waste.

As is extensively described in previous Reports, according to the provisions of Directive 2006/12 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the member states shall take the appropriate measures to establish an integrated and adequate network of installations for the disposal of waste and shall draw up a waste management plan.

In 2007, a study was carried out for the design of an integrated system for the management of hazardous waste in Cyprus, for the types of hazardous waste the recorded quantities of which are too small to attract investment interest from the private sector. In August 2009 the Technical Committee, appointed by the responsible Ministerial Committee, submitted two proposals for the

construction and operation of a Special Waste Management Centre, which caused the intense reaction of the local authorities affected.

The Ministerial Committee, taking into account the recent expressions of interest from the private sector for its involvement in hazardous waste management, decided, on the 7.4.2010, to grant a six-month extension period during which the Department of Environment is expected to examine the proposals from the private sector, update the data available on the production trends of hazardous waste and submit a proposal to the Ministerial Committee for a final decision to be made within two months. Based on the above decision, the Department of Environment assigned the collection of data on the produced quantities of hazardous waste in Cyprus to a private firm.

The Permanent Secretary of MANRE informed us that the work has been completed and the report was submitted to the Department in October 2010.

Asbestos waste management.

As part of the action plan for the setup of an integrated system for the management of asbestos waste, following a decision made by the Council of Ministers on 6.4.2005, a Ministerial Committee was established, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, for the initiation of the procedures to rid governmental buildings of asbestos. At the same time, a Technical Committee was appointed to examine the problem caused from asbestos in public buildings and define a timetable for the necessary actions to resolve this.

According to a memo prepared by the MANRE on the 1.6.2005, the implementation of the programme for the removal of asbestos from public

buildings by the Ministry of Communications and Works began in 2002, with a completion target in 2007. Up to 2003, the asbestos waste collected during this programme was transported to the Amiantos mine, while as from 2004 it was temporarily stored in containers at a site managed by the Department of Public Works in the Nicosia District. Based on the above information, the Council of Ministers decided, inter alia, the immediate initiation of a tenders procedure for the provision of advisory services for the establishment of an integrated system for the management of asbestos waste in Cyprus and, following evaluation of the results of the studies, the submission of a proposal by MANRE for approval of the foreseen actions so that its gradual implementation begins.

Following the tenders procedure, the Department appointed a consortium of companies to provide consultation on the preparation of a feasibility study and an environmental, area planning and feasibility study, as well as invitation to tender documents for the construction and operation of one or more asbestos waste burial sites. The study examined three scenarios according to which asbestos waste would be buried in sanitary landfills, construction waste disposal sites or other sites.

According to the study, following the comparative evaluation of the above options, it appeared that the most rational solution was the use of sanitary landfills, and the Department of Environment agreed with this view. However, the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for the operation of sanitary landfills, expressed its opposition with a letter dated 21.7.2008, claiming a potential reaction from affected communities. Following this development, the Council of Ministers approved, on 26.11.2009, inter alia, the gradual burial of

the asbestos waste of the following decade, 2009-2019, in a suitably formed site at the Amiantos mine.

As we have been informed by the Department, the asbestos waste that was stored in containers at a site of the Department of Public Works have already been transported to the Amiantos mine, while MANRE, as the competent authority, is at the final stage of issuing five asbestos waste management (collection and transportation) licenses as per the 2002-2009 Laws on Solid and Hazardous Waste.

With relation to the above, the following points were noted:

(a) The disposal of the asbestos waste in the Amiantos mine was made without a prior environmental impact assessment which, according to article 4(2) of Law 102(I)/2005, should be performed for every plan and/or programme relevant to waste management.

The Permanent Secretary of MANRE informed us that the burials made in 2010 and the burials scheduled for the coming years are covered by the report of preliminary environmental impact submitted by the Geological Survey to the Department of the Environment in 2003.

(b) Based on the consultants' report, the Amiantos mine site presents technoeconomic disadvantages (e.g. transportation costs) and a low score in environmental criteria and is only considered an adequate solution for the temporary storage of the waste until the necessary works have been completed.

The Permanent Secretary of MANRE informed us that, since other alternatives considered in the report could not be implemented, the use of the site of Amiantos mine was the next choice.

(c) The licence necessary before the commencement of the operation of any establishment performing disposal activities, according to article 19 of Law 215(I)/2002, was not obtained.

As we were informed by the Permanent Secretary, although the licence has not been issued, the Department has required that all criteria and standards deemed necessary to protect the environment and public health are followed. She also noted that the use of the specified area adopted was in context of the principle of the European Union according to which waste should be returned, where environmentally possible, at its place of origin and that a licence issued for the site would be seen as rendering the situation permanent, a fact not accepted by the Amiantos community.

We asked to be informed about the future disposal sites for asbestos materials, particularly in view of the imminent return of the Vereggaria settlement to the Republic of Cyprus. The settlement, which is situated in the Kato Polemidia Municipality, and used to house the families of British militaries of the Episcopi and Akroteri Garrisons, comprises of buildings made of asbestos materials, which should be disposed of.

The Permanent Secretary informed us that the matter is still under negotiation with the British authorities and therefore there is no final decision on whether this waste will be managed in Cyprus.