

## CYPRUS

# The Cyprus performance towards enhancing policy coherence for (sustainable) development

Charalambos Stergiou, Yolanda Frangou, Charalambos Vrasidas  
CARDET – University of Nicosia

This report examines Cyprus progress towards policy coherence for (sustainable) development in line with the commitments arising from the Republic's status as a Member State of the European Union on the one hand, and the target 17.14 of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 aspiring to "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development" on the other hand. The national voluntary review on the implementation of Agenda2030 and the progress towards achieving the SDGs in Cyprus, published by the Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017), does not include the demand to "enhance policy coherence for sustainable development" as a main priority. Moreover, Cyprus did not participate in the latest reporting process for Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) launched by the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) of the European Commission.

There is a fundamental difference between the concept of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) and how these two concepts are inter-related. While PCD refers to minimizing the negative impact of non-development policies on the development goals of developing countries, the broader concept of PCSD - stemming from the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda - focuses on the impact of all policies on sustainable development at all levels: national, EU, cross-country and global (EC, 2019). PCSD is a "considerably more complex" (ECDPM, 2010) principle. According to the definition provided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): "PCSD is an approach and policy tool to integrate the economic, social, and environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making. It aims to

increase governments' capacities to achieve the following objectives: 1) Foster synergies across economic, social and environmental policy areas; 2) Identify trade-offs and reconcile domestic policy objectives with internationally agreed objectives; and 3) Address the spillovers of domestic policies" (OECD, 2015). As accurately put by Mackie, Ronceray and Sprriengs in the case of PCSD the policy makers have to ensure multi-directional coherence by aiming multiple goals at the same time, while PCD coherence is mostly uni-directional, meaning that it is directed towards one single cause; this cause is mainly the interest of the developing countries (ECDPM, 2010).

PCD was first integrated into EU fundamental law in 1992 (Maastricht Treaty) and further reinforced in the Lisbon Treaty (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, TFEU, Art. 208 – entered into force in 2009). Since 2005, PCD has been a political commitment for the Commission, Council and European Parliament. In June 2017, the new European Consensus on Development, the shared vision and framework for action for development cooperation for the European Union and its Member States, reaffirmed the commitment to PCD and recognized it as a crucial element of the strategy to achieve SDGs in the partner countries<sup>1</sup>. While PCD has been promoted in European countries, it has not received adequate, or the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the European Consensus on Development, see [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy/european-consensus-development\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy/european-consensus-development_en)

same level of attention by some governments throughout the years. In the case of Cyprus, PCD remains a commitment for the Republic of Cyprus stemming from its EU membership, i.e. (a) its overall commitments in line with the aforementioned treaties; and (b) the 2017 new European Consensus on Development which reaffirmed the EU Commitment to PCD foreseeing that the concept will be applied across all policies. In parallel, during the United Nations Summit that saw the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Anastasiades, highlighted the importance of delivering a better, more prosperous and peaceful world and stated that “Cyprus is committed both nationally and as EU member to implementing the goals and targets of our agenda [the 2030 Agenda] at home and abroad”<sup>2</sup>.

In spite of the above commitments of the Republic of Cyprus, there are certain inadequacies at the national level for establishing the mechanisms to monitor policy coherence which is an impediment for Cyprus to meet its PCD commitments towards the EU and the PCSD target 17.14 stemming from the Agenda 2030. In March 2013, the Eurogroup decided for a “bail-in” as a result of the deep Cyprus economic crisis, and Cyprus agreed on implementing strict austerity measures with serious effects on all aspects of economy and society. . As a result, the Cyprus Aid’s Development Cooperation Agency<sup>3</sup>, established in 2005 commissioned to steer the Cyprus’ Official Development Assistance, was suspended. There is not adequate information and updated data available on the Policy Coherence for Development in Cyprus. According to the Cyprus response to the DG DEVCO’s questionnaire for the compilation of the “Policy Coherence

for Development (PCD) 2015 EU Report” (Questionnaire for EU-PCD Report 2015):

- Cyprus does not have a legal basis on PCD
- Cyprus does not have a political commitment (e.g. in government programmes, strategic documents on development cooperation) on PCD
- Cyprus does not have reporting obligations on PCD
- Cyprus does not have coordination mechanisms on PCD within the national administration
- The Cyprus Parliament is not involved in PCD
- Cyprus does not have thematic priority areas regarding PCD and no initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen PCD-relevant knowledge and skills through e.g. trainings
- Civil society and the private sector is not involved in the discussions on PCD-relevant issues

No response was received by Cyprus as part of the process led by the European Commission for the development of the 2019 PCD Report. This can be partly explained by the fact that in May 2018, the responsibility of coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the commitments of Cyprus with regard to the United Nations Strategic Objectives of Sustainable Development Goals 2030 shifted to the Directorate-General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development and partly by a lack of prioritization of PCD and development policies -at governmental level- by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Until May 2018, the Cyprus’ institutional mechanism for the implementation of Agenda 2030 was comprised mainly of Ministries and other governmental services, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated the publication of the First Voluntary Progress Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2030; in this report selected SDGs are featured as a priority for Cyprus, based on the analysis of the current situation and the needs and capabilities of the country compared to the 17 SDGs (DG EPCD, N.D.); the SDG 17 was not amongst them.

<sup>2</sup> Address by H.E. Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, 26 September 2015. Retrieved from

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20508cyprus.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> For more information about Cyprus Aid, see

[http://www.cyprusaid.gov.cy/planning/cyprusaid.nsf/page07\\_en/page07\\_en?OpenDocument](http://www.cyprusaid.gov.cy/planning/cyprusaid.nsf/page07_en/page07_en?OpenDocument)

We consider the reinvigoration of the discussion on PCD/PCSD in Cyprus as part of a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectorial approach to be a key element leading potentially to long-term positive outcomes in certain sectors, such as migration and climate change. The role of civil society, governmental stakeholders and other interested parties, including academia and private sector, has to be emphasized in this process. Civil society organisations (CSOs) make a valuable contribution to public policy-making processes, while the private sector has a central role in advancing innovation (OECD, 2019). The involvement of all key actors on PCD/PCSD as part of a national network for the promotion of policy coherence in Cyprus is instrumental for the promotion of coherent policies. Essentially adequate resources must be invested for the implementation of such a Strategy in Cyprus by the government, since CSOs do not have the capacity to control and monitor PCD policies.

Following the lack of coordination mechanisms in the national administration as well as low awareness on PCD/PCSD, the international center CARDET<sup>4</sup> led an initiative for the promotion of PCD/PCSD in Cyprus, as part of the DEAR (Development Education and Awareness Raising) European project InterCap<sup>5</sup>. InterCap endeavours to promote PCD/PCSD at governmental and non-governmental level aiming in the long-run to: (a) create a team of representatives from immigration and education authorities, decision-makers, universities, CSOs and other stakeholders for the peer exchange of knowledge and views on PCD/PCSD; and (b) raise awareness to stakeholders and interested parties in order to take action for the eventual promotion of the PCD concept to decision and policy makers at national level. As mentioned above, Cyprus does not have a legal basis on PCD nor a political commitment on PCD/PCSD and that the level of awareness on PCD/PCSD is low; this became evident during the initial communication and discussion with stakeholders at the

local meeting held by CARDET as part of the InterCap project. As a first step, a two-fold approach was defined for the next period in order to increase the level of awareness on PCD/PCSD topic: (a) focus on thematic educational workshops for key stakeholders (including CSOs, education authorities and academics, governmental representatives) in synergy with other local initiatives, such as the EU-funded project “Walk The Global Walk”<sup>6</sup>; (b) the publication of position papers to raise awareness on potential conflicts of interest and perceived incoherence. The close collaboration and the creation of sustainable synergies with a number of key stakeholders, ministries and departments in Cyprus, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, responsible for monitoring the progress of the PCD and the Agenda 2030 (together with the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development who is the responsible entity for coordinating the implementation of SDGs at national level), the private sector, local authorities, education and academia, civil society and other interested parties must be sought and established for this effort to be successful.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information, see [www.cardet.org](http://www.cardet.org)

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see [www.developtogether.eu](http://www.developtogether.eu)

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see [www.walktheglobalwalk.eu](http://www.walktheglobalwalk.eu)

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