

# Notes & News

●President Clerides on 19 December presented a donation of €1,000 to the Cyprus Red Cross as his personal contribution to international assistance for the **children of Afghanistan**, made instead of sending Christmas and New Year cards this year.

●Health Ministry figures issued on 1 December gave the total number of **HIV cases** diagnosed in Cyprus from 1986 until October 2001 as only 374, of which 219 were locals and 155 foreigners. The low number in proportion to population was attributed to observance of traditional family values, high usage of condoms and the low number of intravenous drug users.

●Communications and Works Minister Averof Neophytou on 5 December inaugurated new **air traffic control** equipment for the Nicosia flight information region, as the first phase of system upgrading which will cost some €30 million in total. He said that the new system would assist Cyprus in its aim to be the air traffic control bridge between Europe and the Middle East, acting as the regional centre of the Eurocontrol network.

●Cypriot breast cancer campaigner **Stella Kyriakidou** on 5 December came second in the annual "Woman of Europe" international poll intended to honour women who have made a major humanitarian or artistic contribution. First place went to the Greek actress Irene Papa for her promotion of the European cultural identity.

●Official **trade statistics** issued on 9 December showed that in the first seven months of 2001 Cyprus' trade deficit, before invisibles such as earnings from tourism, rose to €1,144.6 million compared with €962.4 million in the same period in 2000. Imports totalled €1,526 million in January-July (up €205 million), while exports increased from €358.5 million to €381.4 million.

●Former Foreign Minister **Ioannis Christophides** died in Nicosia General Hospital on 9 December at the age of 77. A lawyer by profession, he had held various official posts under President Makarios, including that of Foreign Minister in 1972-78, after which he was for some years chairman of the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CyTA).

●The latest excavations of the ancient city of **Amathus** near Limassol have produced rich pottery finds such as lamps, Roman and Byzantine copper coins, an inscribed silver ring and a stone mould with an incised swallow. The latest work was directed by Dr



•Ancient city uncovered... Amathus near Limassol.

Pavlos Flourentzos of the Department of Antiquities.

●President Clerides on 11 December attended a ceremony at the **US embassy** in Nicosia to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington three months earlier on 11 September. He stressed that Cyprus supported the international alliance against terrorism and would not allow terrorism to destroy civilizations or to produce conflicts between civilizations.

●The main Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot **trade union federations** have signed a joint co-operation protocol with Poland's Solidarity union organization, the first such intercommunal accord with an external third party. The protocol expressed support for the accession of Cyprus and Poland to the European Union and specified that the federations would co-operate within the EU framework.

●The Church of the Transfiguration of Christ at Palaechori in the Troodos Mountains has been added to UNESCO's **World Heritage List** as being of outstanding cultural importance. Containing well-preserved



•On UNESCO's list... A fresco in the Church of the Transfiguration of Christ at Palaechori.

frescoes dating from the late 15th century, the church is the 10th in the Troodos area to be included on the UNESCO list.

●New **measures to promote tourism** approved by the Council of Ministers on 12 December included the temporary abolition of airliner landing fees at Larnaca and Paphos airports as soon as parliamentary approval was given and the suspension in April and May 2002 of the €8 boarding tax payable by passengers on flights to and from Cyprus. The cost of the measures was estimated at €5.5 million, within a total of €25 million to be allocated to additional tourism promotion in 2002. Official figures showed that, in the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks on the USA, tourist arrivals were 20 per cent down in October compared with the same month in 2000.

●The Republic of Cyprus on 19 December formally ratified the **European Convention on the Transfer of Proceedings in Criminal Matters**, which will enter into force for Cyprus on March 20, 2002. It specifies that a contracting state may request another to take proceedings against a suspected person and then itself waive proceedings. A contracting state receiving such a request may only refuse to act if it considers the alleged offence to be political or if it believes that the request is based on considerations of race, religion or nationality. □



•Liquid of life... Heavy rain swells the reservoirs.

## Heavy rainfall boosts reserves

Stormy weather, seasonal snow in the mountains and torrential rainfall elsewhere in December caused some flooding and damage to potato crops and buildings, but had the beneficial effect of increasing water reserves in dams to record end-of-year levels.

Rainfall in December was measured at over 220 mm, more than double the norm for the month and the highest monthly level since the record 308 mm which fell in December 1991. As a result, water reserves in Cyprus' dams rose by 49 million cubic metres to 64 cubic metres, compared with only 24 million cubic metres held at the end of December 2000.

Because new dams have been built over the past decade, the increase in reserves in December 2001 was higher than in December 1991, although the all-time monthly record remained the 65 million cubic metre inflow recorded in January 1989. The 17 main dams in Cyprus have a total capacity of 274 million cubic metres, not including the Tamassos dam currently under construction.

Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment Minister Costas Themistocleous commented that the heavy rainfall was "very beneficial". It followed several years of below-average levels which had produced semi-drought conditions in parts of the island and persistent water shortages.

●As well as causing crop damage in the Kokkinochoria potato-producing region, the heavy rain in early December destroyed part of the Roccas Bastion in Nicosia's Venetian walls close to the Paphos Gate, the heavily fortified stretch dividing the Government-controlled area from Turkish-occupied Nicosia. Through UN mediation, the Turkish Cypriot "authorities" agreed to undertake repair work in tandem with the Cyprus Department of Antiquities, the first time they had agreed to bicomunal work on the section of the walls controlled by Turkish forces. □

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