



• Campus conversation ... Students at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia.

Education viewed as key to progress and prosperity

The importance attached by the Government and people of Cyprus to education as the key to future economic progress and prosperity was reflected in the latest official figures for educational expenditure and numbers of teachers employed and pupils/students enrolled. Published by the Cyprus Statistical Office on 16 November, the figures confirmed that Cyprus compares favourably with existing members of the European Union in the educational field, producing highly educated new generations capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

● Total expenditure on education in the 1999/2000 academic year was C£268.8 million, equivalent to 15.6 per cent of state expenditure and 5.7 per cent of GDP.

● The public cost per student/pupil by level of educational classification was C£1,272 at pre-primary level, C£1,444 at primary level, C£2,092 at secondary level and C£5,081 at tertiary level.

● At all levels of education there were 1,210 educational institutions, with 163,654 full-time pupils and students and 11,567 teaching staff, giving a pupil/teacher ratio of 14:1.

● Enrolments of pupils/students were 26,155 at pre-primary level, 63,715 at primary level, 63,043 at secondary level, 10,414 at tertiary level and 327 in special education.

● 80.3 per cent of the total number of pupils students were enrolled in public educational institutions and 19.7 per cent in private establishments.

The report also revealed that there were 12,147 Cypriot students studying abroad in the 1999/2000 academic year, with 52.8 per cent going to Greece, 23.2 per cent to the United Kingdom and 14 per cent to the USA.

● Cyprus on 21 November ratified the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, laying down rights to fair assessment in a reasonable time for inter-country acceptance of higher educational qualifications with the aim of facilitating study and work abroad. □

Notes & News

● The Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CyTA) has been chosen as the commercial manager of the **Black Sea Fibre Optic Cable System (BSFOCS)**, which became operational on 1 September. Jointly owned by CyTA and companies in 10 other countries, the 1,300-km BSFOCS provides high quality, low cost telecommunications between countries in the Black Sea region and is linked to Europe, the Middle East and the Far East via other cable systems in which CyTA is a partner.

● Attorney General Alecos Markides on 8 November ruled out **human cloning** in Cyprus, noting that legislation to that effect and creating a National Bioethics Committee was currently before the House of Representatives. Mr Markides was speaking on the eve of the Council of Europe's sixth European Conference of National Ethics Committee, which was held in Paphos on 11-13 November. The legislation was adopted on 29 November.

● The **2001 Rainbow Festival** held in Nicosia's Municipal Gardens on 11 November celebrated cultural diversity by bringing Greek Cypriots together with immigrants working and studying in Cyprus. The event was organized by the Immigrant Support Action Group and the Cyprus section of Amnesty International with the support of the Youth Board of Cyprus.

● Cyprus and the European Investment Bank (EIB) on 23 November signed a loan agreement under which 50 million euros would be made available for financing the new **Nicosia General Hospital**, as part of European Union's pre-accession support facility for Cyprus. Under this facility, which runs until the end of 2003, EIB funding is also earmarked for major projects involving the University of Cyprus, the Electricity Authority and air traffic control. The EIB has also expressed an interest in participating in the funding of the development of Larnaca and Paphos international airports.

● Justice and Public Order Minister Nicos Koshis confirmed on 22 November that Cyprus would provide 30 officers for the **European Police Squad (Europol)** currently in the process of being formed by the European Union.

● Cyprus was voted among the top three **best tourist destinations** in the latest *Daily Telegraph* poll of some 25,000 Britons. Italy topped the poll, followed by the Greek islands; but Cyprus came an impressive third, demonstrating the island's growing popularity with British holiday-makers. The poll also showed that Turkey was among the five least

favourite destinations for British tourists.

● A number of important **Cypriot antiquities** were purchased at a Christie's auction in London on 6 November by the A.G. Leventis Foundation and will be donated to the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia. Dating back some 4,000 years, the items were from the large collection of ancient Cypriot art amassed since the mid-1960s by well-known British zoologist and anthropologist Desmond Morris, author of *The Naked Ape* and also of *The Art of Ancient Cyprus* published in 1985. The pieces acquired for Cyprus are from the Bronze and Geometric periods and include pottery, a figurine of a deer, a representation of wine-making and a lance.

● The House of Representatives on 1 November approved by 32 votes to 19 a Government Bill providing for the expansion and management of **Larnaca and Paphos international airports** by private companies. The Government subsequently narrowed the 10 preferred bidders (of 23 original hopefuls) to a short-list of five, namely the Alterra Consortium, Cyprus Gateway Airports, Fraport AG, Hermes Airports and Project Pegasus. Of these international consortia,



• Regional hub... Larnaca International Airport.

the first four include major Cypriot companies. The contract will be awarded in September 2002.

● Cyprus on 23 November joined 29 other countries in signing the Council of Europe's **Convention against Crime through the Internet**, designed to stamp out offences such as violation of intellectual property rights and on-line fraud. The convention will enter into force when it has been ratified by five signatories, three of which must be Council of Europe members.

● Finance Minister Takis Klerides, Commerce, Industry and Tourism Minister Nicos Rolandis and Central Bank Governor Afxentis Afxentiou were among those who addressed a joint meeting of the **London and Cyprus Chambers of Commerce** in London on 27 November, organized to promote Cyprus as a desirable location for inward investment and international business ventures. □



• Popular beaches... Cyprus is in the UK top three.

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