Dear Loucas,

Thank you for the update. Please see some queries and suggestions in the text, let me know if you agree. Please revise, also for language and readability and try to reduce the length to 600 words.

Thanks and regards,

Camilla

Thank you Camilla, I went through all of you suggestions and I made the amendments, check also the bubbles for further comments.

I made every effort to revise and reduce the length to 627 words.

Let me know if you need anything else

luc

*The presidential intervention to prevent the risk of new strikes in the state hospitals, the dispute over the renewal of the collective agreements of airports ground handling workers and the social outcry over the exclusion of women from national guards are the main topics of interests in this article. This country update reports on the latest developments in working life in Cyprus in the second quarter of 2016.*

# Presidential intervention to soothe conflict in the health sector

On Friday, 10 June 2016 the state doctors' union (PASYKI) announced their intention to strike against medical understaffing. The notice induced the intervention of the President of the Republic into the conflict. He mediated in order to soothe the dispute and push for the implementation of the National Health System. It is noted that the austerity measures, subjected to the memorandum of understanding signed between EU and Cyprus in 2013, blocked the recruitment of staff. At the same time, state hospitals experienced an unprecedented overcrowding. The President requested by the director of medical services for a detail list of the shortages and he held subsequent meetings with all health stakeholders to take decisions upon the most urgent needs. The Cabinet convened urgently and approved the decisions, including:

1. the hiring of 28 physicians;
2. the submission of the bill on the autonomy of state hospitals by 15 July 2016;
3. the hiring of an external expert for assessing the needs for medical and paramedical staff and
4. the assignment to a consultancy agency to carry out a financial impact study in preparation of the NHS.

# Warning strikes of ground handling workers

The deadlock on the renewal of the collective agreements of ground handling workers caused work stoppages in Larnaca and Paphos airports on 4 and 6 July 2016. The interim agreement, reached after the labour minister's intervention, foreseen the payment of the annual salary increment of 2015 into two installments, 50% in May and 50% in June 2016. The companies made the payment in May but refused to make the due payment for June. Additionally, workers demand the restoration of the collective agreements to the pre-crisis status but the ground handling companies claim for ground changes of the collective agreements. The public statements of the General Director of the Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB) over the warning strikes stirred up things. He said that when the 'well-paid ground handling workers' strike for pay demands, tens of companies are negatively affected. Trade unionists and workers perceived the statement provocative and soon after the Secretary General of the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) responded. He argued that workers have been put against the wall by OEB but the employers who violate the agreements remained in the immune.

# Social outcry over exclusion of women from National Guard

Within the frame of the modernization of the National Guard, on Friday,15 May 2016 the Cabinet approved the recruitment of 3,000 professional soldiers and the simultaneous reduction of the mandatory military service for conscript soldiers from 24 to 14 months of service. The decision caught the opposition parties unaware and drew harsh critics for the lack of information. The announced scheme, however, attracted the interest of the unemployed youth. Τhe submitted applications surpassed all the expectations of the defence ministry as 5,005 applications submitted for 3,000 vacancies. The advertising of the vacancies, from the other side, which excluded women for applying drew the reaction of the civil society. Trade unions, NGOs and women's organizations perceived the scheme as an act of institutional discrimination against women. The defence minister in responding to the outcry argued that eligible to apply are those who completed their mandatory service and this excludes not only women but men as well who were relieved of their duty to serve in the army.