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Document for information

**Installation of a new antenna (Pluto II) in the
Sovereign Base Areas (Cyprus)**

Report by the Cyprus Government

*Document prepared by
the Directorate of Culture and of Cultural and Natural Heritage*

**Installation of a new antenna (Pluto II) in the
Sovereign Base Areas (Cyprus)**

Report by the Government of Cyprus

1. The Governments of the Republic of Cyprus and of the United Kingdom, after a series of discussions which lasted for more than four months and which centered around differing opinions and assessments of the potential health and environmental impacts from the construction and operation of a new antennae complex at the Salt Lake site near Akrotiri village, agreed on the following:

- (a) The environmental impacts assessment prepared for the British Ministry of Defence, and observations of the Cyprus Environment Service relating to the environmental impact, to be reviewed by a respected, independent, transparent and international panel of reputable experts with relevant experience. The panel would consider the issue in a holistic manner, and give an informed opinion.
- (b) A commitment to co-operate in producing an environmental management strategy for the Salt Lake site, including the establishment of a fully protected nature reserve in the Salt Lake area.
- (c) A commitment by the British Government to extend, as soon as possible, application of the 1979 Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, to the Sovereign Base Areas, (SBAs) and to designate the Akrotiri Salt Lake for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, as provided for in article 2.1 of the Ramsar Convention.
- (d) A joint programme will be established to monitor bird movements during the winter period and the period of reproduction and migration over the area.
- (e) Reiterated their commitment to conduct a joint long-term medical research study in the area in order to respond to the concerns of local residents on the impacts of the electromagnetic fields.

2. On item (a) above, the Government of the United Kingdom selected and secured the services of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). The International Panel's two reviews,

- (i) established that the EIA produced in 1997 and its 2001 updating, were far below acceptable standards; this means that the High Band Antenna already installed, was constructed without sound, adequate and impartial crucial environmental information;
- (ii) acknowledged the significance of the site in its broader environment;
- (iii) justified the need to apply the precautionary principle;
- (iv) were very careful so as not to be associated with any decision on the installation or not of the antennae.

The project in question has almost been completed.

3. As far as the preparation of an environmental management strategy is concerned (item {b} above), the SBAs authorities are in close cooperation with the Government of Cyprus for the production and implementation of a management plan for the broader area of the Akrotiri Peninsula. A draft of the table of contents has been produced and the process for the establishment of the management committee (synthesis and terms of reference) is under way.

4. On item (c) above, the SBAs became a signatory to the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats in October 2001. On the designation of a Ramsar site at Akrotiri, the Cyprus Environment Service expressed its strong disagreement on the boundaries proposed by the SBAs. The U.K. authorities proceeded with their initial proposal and as a result a fragmented ecosystem was finally designated as a Ramsar site on 20th March, 2003.

5. Concerning (d) above, a joint programme was established to monitor bird movements during the winter period and the period of reproduction and of movements over the area. As a result of the implementation of the programme, 3 separate reports were produced, that is:

- (i) Impacts to the Avifauna from the Establishment of the “Pluto II” Antenna in the Akrotiri Salt Lake (prepared by the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment).
- (ii) Impacts of the Antennas Complex on the Avifauna of Akrotiri Salt Lake (prepared by the Game Fund of the Ministry of Interior).

The two above reports identify significant impacts from the antennae complex and express grave concerns on their combined effects at full development.

- (iii) Akrotiri Bird Surveys 2002-2003 (prepared by RPS Ecoscope, Applied Ecologist and Heritage Environmental Limited).

All reports will be submitted to the Independent International Panel (IEMA) for their review.

6. In the field relevant to the health of the Akrotiri villagers (item {e} above) a protocol for a health study has been prepared and agreed by both Governments. The health study is being conducted by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Cyprus in cooperation with Bristol University. The study is expected to be completed in 20 months.