

**Address of the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance of Cyprus Mr Kyriacos
Koushos at the 12th Meeting of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of
Accidents**

Madame President,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege and honour to address the 12th Meeting of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, that marks the important milestone of the thirtieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention.

Cyprus attributes great significance to the work and the activities related to the Convention. This meeting provides an excellent forum for closer cooperation on environmental issues. Unfortunately, Russia's invasion of Ukraine put cooperation mechanisms on these issues to the test, bringing new environmental and infrastructure challenges and putting global peace and security at risk, including the severe long-term consequences on Ukraine's ecosystems, infrastructure and biodiversity and the eventual massive efforts that will be required to support the green, sustainable and resilient reconstruction of Ukraine. Cyprus is committed to cooperating with Ukraine in these efforts, and providing any support needed. I note, with particular pleasure, the recent deposit by Ukraine of its instrument of ratification, bringing the total number of Parties to the Convention to 42.

Cyprus is committed to protecting human health and the environment against industrial accidents and is eager to participate in every action that promotes safety culture and facilitates cooperation between public authorities. After all, we have the bitter experience of an accident of this type that happened in 2011 in Cyprus, destroyed a large power station and killed 13 people. The recent disaster in the port of Beirut is also concerning and testifies to the fact that we must spare no effort in preventing these events from occurring. I truly believe that sharing experience and good practices is paramount and Cyprus is committed to actively contribute to such activities.

From evaluating past and recent activities of the Convention, I am convinced that it is achieving its goals. Some past activities, such as the seminar on land use planning and industrial safety and the seminar on the Beirut port accident were steps in the right direction, as is the development of the Industrial Accident Notification system, a key parameter in the effective cooperation of the Parties.

Furthermore, the future plans as presented in the work plan of 2023-24 are really promising. Issues such as the assistance to non-Parties in strengthening implementation of appropriate regulations, and the consideration of emerging risks and technological developments are of major importance. It is also necessary to

strengthen existing infrastructures, to facilitate cooperation in projects and ensure that current systems are frequently reexamined.

Cyprus remains committed to the projects and initiatives which have been launched, is gradually improving and better controlling its infrastructures and is constantly aiming to strengthen its contribution and performance as a Party of the Convention. Cyprus recently hosted the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Nicosia, the first event of such magnitude to take place in the Mediterranean region. The selected themes of the Conference addressed very important challenges, emphasizing that infrastructure development should go hand in hand with sustainable development goals and the Agenda 2030. Cyprus is committed to capitalizing on the results of this Conference, affirming countries' commitment to transition to a green economy with sustainable infrastructure at its core and recognizing the important role of the Environment for Europe process. Working in line with the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the 9th Ministerial Meeting, we will continue our efforts to ensure that sustainable and resilient infrastructure investment is at the core of green economy policies and commitments.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Cyprus, as an EU Member State, has a solid and very effective legislative framework. Nevertheless, we recognize that the management of SEVESO industrial accidents is a complex, cross-cutting issue. There are always opportunities for improvement, to promote compliance and ensure public

safety. Let me express my hope and belief, that by coming together here today we can strongly advance the goal of minimizing industrial accidents with transboundary effects. Cyprus remains strongly committed to this goal.

Thank you.