

Statement of Cyprus

By Vassiliki Anastasiadou

Minister of Transport, Communications and Works

Dear Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you today on this important event. Furthermore, I would like to thank to the organizers and the speakers of the 4th International Space Forum (ISF) 2019 for the great effort put in organizing such an important event.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The sea has always been important to Cyprus as a source of growth and progress in sectors such as maritime and coastal tourism, merchant shipping, fishing and aquaculture, and more recently with the emerging prospects of the development of sectors such as offshore extraction of oil and natural gas. Therefore, Blue Growth significantly impacts the economy of Cyprus.

The Blue Economy sectors in Cyprus employ over 20,000 people and generate around 623 million euros, representing the 3.2% of the national economy and the 5.4% of the jobs, with coastal tourism accounting for 74% of Blue Economy-based jobs. The sectors in Maritime and coastal tourism show a significant upward trend, which corresponds to 85% of total employment demand of the blue economic sectors. The second biggest blue economic sector, also exhibiting a significant upward trend, is Maritime transport, which corresponds to 13% of total employment demand of the blue economic sectors. These trends are related to the strategic objective of Cyprus for further promotion of merchant shipping as well as the pursuit for exploiting hydrocarbon deposits in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Cyprus.

At the same time, Cyprus's location and climate provide optimal conditions for satellite communications, especially in the South Mediterranean, Middle East, Asia and Africa. As a result, there have been multi-million-euro investments in Cyprus from various satellite companies.

Cyprus is actively engaged in space technology services. To date, Cyprus has granted 10 licenses to organizations to launch telecommunication satellites using space that Cyprus has secured through ITU. The Government of Cyprus has focused on creating a more efficient communications landscape through the development of digital infrastructures and policies. Due to global demand for increased bandwidth and the growth of data centres and IP traffic, there is a demand for networks that will ensure seamless and secure communications. Cyprus can capitalize on these demands, as a result of its geographic position between Europe, Asia and Africa.

Space Technology is a unique resource to promote Blue Growth in Cyprus and in the Mediterranean. Space technology can be used through satellite images, data and communications for applications such as disaster management, water quality, agricultural monitoring, environmental monitoring, natural resource management, sustainable land use, urban development, refugee migration surveillance, coordination of emergency responses and humanitarian assistance. Among the technologies available for

Blue Growth, Copernicus Marine Service provide Earth Observation data needed in the fields of Ocean Monitoring, Oil & Gas and Renewable Energy. The Copernicus Marine Environment Monitoring Service provides services to support all marine applications, including marine safety, marine resources and coastal and marine environment. Earth observation data from satellites can be used for large area monitoring, mapping, exploration, calibrating existing activities and helping improve planning activities. Marine Earth observation data can benefit maritime exploitation, ship navigation, fisheries management, ocean surveillance, development of renewable energies and oil & gas exploration.

In addition, Earth observation for environmental monitoring is an important tool for Cyprus, due to environmental issues affecting our region. Combining Earth observation tools with in-situ modelling will be a significant asset for Cyprus, the region and the Mediterranean area. Earth observation and modelled data can support most domains in the maritime and marine field and help to provide effective solutions to often complex problems in the blue economy. Earth Observation data can be used to support the growth of renewable energy by providing information that can reduce production costs, improve profitability and thus lead to a competitive advantage.

Cyprus has recently taken steps forward for the establishment of two Centres of Excellence that will contribute into the research and development of Blue Growth activities in Cyprus. Both will be co-funded by European Commission and Cyprus.

- A) The first centre is the Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence project focuses on creating an inspiring environment for conducting basic and applied research and innovation in the areas of the space technology and remote sensing for monitoring the environment. It is expected to create 200 new jobs and place Cyprus as a key player in terms of research and innovation in space technology.
- B) The second centre is the Marine and Maritime Research, Innovation, Technology Centre of Excellence, which focuses on the promotion of scientific and business innovation in maritime and marine life in the broader eastern Mediterranean. This substantial initiative is expected to support of Blue Growth and contribute to upgrading the services offered in the broader area of Blue Economy.

There are also various running initiatives and programs that focus on blue growth, such as:

- A) The Maritime Institute of Eastern Mediterranean which undertakes strategic actions and initiatives in coherence with relevant EU and national strategies and policies such as the Blue Growth Strategy and the Integrated Maritime Policy of the EU as well as the Smart Specialisation Strategy of Cyprus.
- B) The Cyprus-Ireland Blue Growth Initiative, where two EU island nations, both with strong marine and maritime sectors, worked together to explore marine litter, blue growth, marine renewable energy, entrepreneurship within the blue economy.
- C) The THAL-CHOR project developed a methodology for Maritime Spatial Planning to resolve spatial conflicts between different uses of the sea.

D) The Cyprus Foundation of the Sea (FOS) promotes marine and maritime research, knowledge and innovation towards a sustainable blue economy.

Also, Cyprus, among other international organizations and associations, is a member of the United Nations Committee on Peaceful uses of Outer space (known as COPUOS). In addition, we have strong relations with ESA as an ESA (European Space Agency) Cooperating State, since 2016. Several Blue Economy projects are funded already by national funds through the ESA PECS (Plan for European Cooperating States) programme under ESA guidance and project management.

Therefore, as an island nation, Cyprus has a vested interest in Blue Growth and seeks to cooperate with other Mediterranean countries in order to develop a common Blue Economy. As the Mediterranean countries share to a great extent similar goals, objectives and priorities for the Blue Economy, they can develop strong synergies in terms of economic growth, environmental protection and space economy.

In conclusion, Cyprus has started building a Blue Economy that maximizes the potential of all maritime and coastal resources to improve the lives of all, by using space technologies and innovations to build prosperity and conserve marine resources for future generations.

Thank you.