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**ISHCCO General Assembly, 7 - 8 April 2022**

**OPEN SESSION – ISHCCO CONFERENCE**

**FRIDAY 08<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022**

The Director of the Department of Labour Inspection presents his apologies for not being able to address in person this General Assembly. Therefore, I shall read his welcome message.

**Dear**

- **Dr. Reiner Obermaier, President of ISHCCO**
- **Mr. Andreas Theodotou, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus**
- **ISHCCO National Member Association representatives**
- **Distinguished guests**
- **Ladies and gentlemen**

I would like to especially welcome to Cyprus the delegates of ISHCCO as well as professionals and experts on construction safety and health participating in the current event. It is a great pleasure to address the today's Seminar during the General Assembly of the International Safety and Health Construction Coordinators Organization 2022 hosted in Cyprus by the Cyprus Association of Civil Engineers in Cyprus.

Also, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Cyprus Association of Civil Engineers for its extensive activity and promotion of safety and health issues, contributing to the common goal of improving safety and health in the construction sector and the common vision for zero accidents.

It is indeed very important to bring together experts from different countries. In fact, the exchange of knowledge and experiences contributing to the improvement of safety and health conditions in construction sector is a real benefit for all of us.

The Department of Labour Inspection is the competent authority of Cyprus for occupational safety and health. Therefore, the harmonization of Cyprus Legislation with EU Directives on safety and health issues and the enforcement of this legislation is under the Department's competency. Within the scope of its competencies, the Department has been enforcing, among others, provisions related to the implementation of prevention in the construction sector and the appointment of Safety and Health Construction Coordinators since 2002. In 2015, taking into account the experience gained from the enforcement of the national legislation on construction safety and health since 2012, new legislation was introduced. This new legislation had provisions concerning the required qualifications for the Safety and Health Construction Coordinators.

Undoubtedly, the role of Safety and Health Construction Coordinators is necessary and important for the effective management of occupational risks in the construction sector and the creation of the needed prevention culture in the sector.

Based on the results of a research on construction safety conducted by the Department in 2019 and 2021, the role of the Coordinators needs to be strengthened in order to achieve the efficient performance of their duties. Moreover, it is needed to ensure that Coordinators are appointed at the early stages of the project and are able to act without any conflict of interest from either contractors or other stakeholders in the same project. Also, it is essential to ensure that the Coordinators are competent and hold the required qualifications and sufficient knowledge of occupational safety and health issues and of subjects concerning design and construction work.

For ensuring and enforcing the required competencies of Coordinators, the Department is working to prepare a specific legislation which will be on a decree, regulating in detail these competencies. Moreover, to ensure the appointment of Coordinators at the early stages of the project, relevant terms are imposed in the building permits through the consultation procedure of the authorities for the building permits with the Department.

Taking this opportunity, I would like also to highlight that the Department of Labour Inspection supports the global campaign on Vision Zero and has been became an official partner of the campaign since September 2018.

**Dear Guests and Colleagues,**

I am confident that quality and informing international events, such as this seminar, will contribute to better promoting safety and health in the construction sector and the important role of Safety and Health Construction Coordinators.

I am also confident that the resulting deliberations and recommendations of your meeting will contribute not only to enhance the role of Coordinator but also to the enhancement of the cooperation between ISHCCO and Cyprus.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to ISHCCO and the Cyprus Association of Civil Engineers for the invitation and wish you all a constructive and enjoyable meeting.

Anastassios Yiannaki

Director of the

Department of Labour Inspection

Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance of Cyprus