Managing a sustainable tourism industry: the case of Cyprus

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ABSTRACT: Islands and small island states represent case studies regarding sustainable tourism. This article takes Cyprus as an example to assess positive and negative aspects which, from a tourist point of view, characterize each of the traditional pillars of sustainability: social, environmental and economic, including patrimonial and cultural. As the European Commission and the World Trade Organization would have it, the concepts of quality and sustainability are combined to reach total quality. The concept embraces ethical, strategic and commercial criteria and should ensure competitiveness of Cyprus and its tourism facilities. The appraisal as described is largely positive.

Keywords: Cyprus, sustainability, tourism, social, economic, environmental, island

This case study of Cyprus is part of a larger research in progress on the evaluation of the management of tourism sustainability of small islands and developing states (SIDS) in the Mediterranean. Tourism is today at the crossroads of economic, social and environmental considerations and goals and all three need to be balanced: the industry need to be economically viable, ecologically bearable and socially acceptable. Indeed, according to the World Tourism Organization definition (UNWTO website) sustainable tourism development and management refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism, with the establishment of a suitable balance between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Thus, sustainable tourism should make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities and ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing social and economic benefits to all stakeholders and contributing to poverty alleviation.

The Environmental Criteria

Are included in these criteria the protection of sites, of the wildlife and of the flora; the selective sorting and management of waste; water, energy consumption and natural resources management (solar panels, etc...), the management of pollution (CO₂, greenhouse effect), transport, the impact linked to the number of tourists, the raising of customer consciousness, the architecture best suited to the environment and the climate, the restoration of sites... The Anglo-Saxons refer to: « physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency, environmental purity » (United Nations Environment Programme, 2005)
The Social Criteria
They include fair wages and adequate working conditions for employees, hiring and training local guides, promoting local managers towards autonomous management positions (players in their development), local purchases, fair trade, local cuisine, partnerships with families and local associations or NGOs, consideration for the local cultures, traditions and sacred forms of worship, social and cultural impacts, interaction between tourists and locals, their safety, prostitution and child labor, the behavior of tourists that is likely to shock, sponsorship, local development projects, etc… Once again, the Anglo-Saxons refer to: « social equity, visitor fulfilment, local control, community well being, cultural richness and employment quality » (United Nations Environment Programme, 2005).

The Financial, Administrative and Economic Criteria
Viability should foremost be considered, i.e. the economic profitability of a firm, of an association or of its tourist projects/products; in its absence any sustainability is ruled out. This concerns the global financial transparency and that of specific products. The financial aspect entails a customer component: adequate prices that customers are willing to pay, customer satisfaction often linked to the price paid; percentage of the price settled invested in local development projects, integration of the holiday in the local economy and economic fallouts for the locals. Anglo-Saxons refer to « economic viability » and « local prosperity » (United Nations Environment Programme, 2005).

THE CASE OF CYPRUS
Enlightened or discerning tourists assess what they observe from the management of the typical three pillars of sustainability applied to tourism –economic, environmental and social- globally. From this standpoint, Cyprus is an excellent example of a good, balanced compromise between those three dimensions especially in a difficult political context. This case study using the traveler as a witness to management offers the chance to present an original angle to a genuine area of research where more cases studied may change perceptions and draw different lessons learnt.
Cyprus has over 30 years of experience in the sector of tourism. In the Eastern Mediterranean, at the crossroads of three continents (Europe, Asia and Africa), the island is a developed tourist destination in an intensely competitive environment.

The major share of the tourist traffic to Cyprus originates from Western, Central and Northern Europe. In 2003, the United Kingdom remained the major source of tourist traffic, contributing almost 60% of the total tourist arrivals, followed by Germany, Greece, Russia, Sweden and Ireland (each contributing about 5-6%). France (2.1%) is only a medium priority country for Cyprus.

The Strategic Plan for Tourism 2010 aims at introducing sustainability into the tourism development of Cyprus; it will revolve around two pillars: culture and the environment which will reposition Cyprus in the global tourist arena (Cyprus Tourism Organization, 2000).

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND ITS IMPACT

The development of tourism was a delicate decision of the government of the newly established Republic of Cyprus in 1960. Hotels and other tourist infrastructure were constructed and the island began to position itself on the international tourist map up until July 1974 when Turkish troops invaded Cyprus. All economic activity came to a standstill and the tourist sector suffered a devastating blow. About 70% of the total bed capacity was lost as well as 55% of the coastline.

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus constitutes 37% of the surface of the island and has a population of 200 000 people of whom 99% are Muslim. The Greek Cypriots in the south constitute 83% of a total population of 800 000. Nicosia is today the last divided city in Europe (Ledra Street and the Green Line¹). The impact of the political situation will be visible on the economic, social, patrimonial, cultural, environmental aspects studied.

ISLAND SPECIFIC FEATURES

Beach Protection

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily and Sardinia and has a coastal length of 790 kms. As an island destination, Cyprus invested chiefly in the sun and sea clientele. All beaches are public beaches. The blue flag programme is widespread which ensures good
maintenance. Yet jet skiing is allowed and therefore a main source of pollution. In 2005, “Blue Flags” were awarded to a total of 39 organized beaches in 12 municipalities and communities in Cyprus. The Agia Napa region, for example, attracts a large number of tourists, resulting from its golden sandy beaches. All the beaches have been awarded with the EU blue flag for their level of cleanliness and the comprehensive facilities offered in line with the uniform standards set by the European Union. This effort is all the more important as threats due to the climatic change effect do exist: water raises one centimeter and backs four centimeters from the coast every year.

Cruise Tourism

Another Cyprus Tourism Organization initiative is the promotion of cruises from/to Cyprus and of Cyprus as a stop-over cruise destination. The problems involved pertain to all islands making that choice. Larnaka will be converted into a passenger port; tourist operators running cruise ships will certainly benefit. Besides, four marinas with mooring facilities for 2000 vessels are being built. Water sports and yachting are expected on any island. Cyprus could become a diving training center like the occupied northern part and yachting could also bring economic benefits.

Fisheries and Marine Research

The Department of Fisheries and Marine Research developed activities in multidisciplinary fields concerning the sustainable use of marine resources, the development and sound management of fisheries and aquaculture, the marine ecology, the protection of endangered species and habitats, physical and chemical oceanography and the prevention and combat of marine pollution. Furthermore, the department promotes supporting programmes to the fishermen including inter alia, the construction of fishing shelters.

The Cyprus production of fish is mainly derived from the inshore fishery, the trawl fishery, territorial and international waters and a purse seiner, as well as from aquaculture. Fish is scarce because of the lack of rivers as well as on the Mediterranean shore and expensive for the Cypriot consumer or tourist. The products of local marine aquaculture, seabream (tsipoura), seabass (lavraki) and prawns (garides) are becoming popular among the Cypriots and the tourists.
ECONOMIC CRITERIA

Context: background information

2.5 million tourists visit the island each year. The contribution of tourism to the country’s economy is of vital importance. In 2003, total revenue from tourism reached £1.02 billion (Euro 1.74 billion), representing 15.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 30% if the foreign exchange earnings from the export of goods and services. However, Cyprus was able to offer visitors products beyond those of the sun and sea which was a good sustainability criterion. Another major criterion was for Cyprus economy not to be totally dependent on the tourism sector. It was able to maintain a prosperous economy besides tourism resulting from its maritime sector, growing services sector and new technologies as well as its more traditional agriculture (Adam, 2007).

Stricter Control on Tourism Development

By 1989, it seemed absolutely necessary to formulate the right policies to slow down the growth of tourism after the industry had been negatively impacted; thus the government had decided to introduce a moratorium on tourism development. The moratorium lasted 18 months and in December 1990, it was replaced by the New Tourism Development Policy. Its principal aims were directed at ensuring a controlled development on the one hand and diversification and enrichment of the tourist product on the other hand.

When the new policy was formulated, the following issues were examined as priorities: the quality and the need to sustain and protect the environment, the carrying capacity of the beaches, protection of resources and conservation of nature through planning, control of the coastal tourism development, the improvement and enrichment of the tourist product, the improvement of the infrastructure and the protection of the natural and cultural environment.

With the introduction of the New Tourism Development Policy, stricter control on tourism development in the coastal areas at a distance of three kilometres from the shore was enforced. Minimum site requirements were specified to ensure harmonisation of new development with its surroundings and the natural environment in general (Metaxas, 2000).

Alternative forms of tourism clearly intend to liberate the island yet further from its exclusive dependence on the only sun and sea tourist sector. They all contribute to the target of increase of the
per capita expenditure, maximization of economic benefits while, at the same time, they upgrade standards, and satisfy customers as they enrich the whole tourist experience and decrease the seasonality. The economic pillar of tourism sustainability is therefore satisfied.

**Diversification: Alternative Forms of Tourism**

Programmes for the promotion of alternative forms of tourism and diversification of tourism in non-coastal parts of the island were introduced.

*Green Cyprus:* the development of agrotourism in Cyprus: The Cyprus Agrotourism/Rural tourism programme, as designed and launched by the Cyprus Tourism Organization, encourages the conversion of traditional houses in certain picturesque villages for tourist use. A significant number of traditional houses have already been converted into accommodation establishments. The development of agrotourism in Cyprus began in the early nineties and it was promoted via a special incentives scheme administered by the *Cyprus Tourism Organization.* As of 1.05.2004 Cyprus became a full member of the EU and a new phase in the development of agrotourism has begun. The whole of the Cypriot hinterland was declared as a Target 2 area and a new financial assistance scheme aimed at the development of small and medium size enterprises related to agrotourism replaced the previous one. This new, generous scheme is expected to contribute significantly towards the creation of other agrotourism infrastructure (such as handicraft and folk art centers, museums and small wineries) which will complement the accommodation offerings, and thus assist in the development of a well-rounded agrotourist product.

The Cyprus Agrotourism Programme aimed to achieve: economic and social revitalization of rural communities, better geographic and social distribution of the economic benefits from tourism, diversification of the tourist product, provision of a unique, multi-dimensional “Cyprus” experience, conservation of the natural, cultural and built environment

All the sustainability aspects of the agrotourism project are described in *World Tourism Organization* publications (*World Tourism Organization, 2001*): its contribution to the conservation of natural areas, community involvement and benefits, educational and interpretation features, environmental practices in the development and operation of ecotourism facilities,
establishments and services. It fully describes the problems and their solution, the results achieved, the lessons learnt and the monitoring activities.

Among the villages restored, let us quote those of Lythrodontas, Askas, Drousia, Kritou Tera, Nikokleia, Houlou, Goudi… They all open all year round, thus smoothening out the seasonality pattern of Cyprus tourism.

Religious tourism: Important action plans have been drafted and are being implemented for the development of religious tourism in Cyprus. An important conference was held on the subject in 2006. Religious fairs (Panigiria) are colourful fairs held in villages with saint’s name-days are celebrated around the main churches.

Most Greek Cypriots are orthodox Christians. Cyprus was the first country visited by Apostles Paul and Barnabe when christening the region and the first country with a Christian administration. Saint Paul converted the Roman Governor Sergius Paulus. Pilgrims visit monasteries and churches (Kykko, Machairas, Chrysoroyaatissa, Ayios Araklidious, Ayios Minas, etc…) as well as ten churches listed on the Unesco World Heritage sites. Chemins et Rencontres, a Macon-based tour operator specializes in this type of religious tourism in Cyprus.

Nature tourism: hiking, nature trails, cycling, mountain biking. Cycling, especially promoted in the German market encourages the hosting of races and a cycling route network on the way; the site of Germasogeia, for example, hosted events in mountain biking and cross-country mountain bike races.

Well being and pampering tourism (spa, thalasso) is considered for future development.

Learning tourism: Cyprus, like Malta, tries to promote English language courses for private educational institutes. Italy, Poland and Austria were the first countries where the promotion applied.

Golf: Golf is meant to attract high income people, ensure the upgrading of the destination and make a prominent contribution to the economy. A new policy calls for the development of up to 14 golf courses in total. On the basis of the new policy for encouraging investments in golf courses, 27 applications have been submitted which are currently under consideration. The Cyprus Tourism Organization also secured the hosting of the 2006 Golf Business Tourism Forum in Cyprus.
Skiing is available in the winter on Mount Olympus (1951 meters) in the Troodos Mountains. 

Wedding ceremonies and honeymoon is offered due to the Cyprus relation to the goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite. It is promoted mainly in the English, Irish, Russian and Israeli markets.

Medical tourism: this industry is an idea being explored. Cyprus has competitive price in the medical sector. The offer would be linked to fitness and health, spas, treatment and therapy centers, dental and aesthetic surgery clinics. It has been included in the Cyprus Tourism Organization’s 2003-2010 Tourism Strategy.

Theme parks: Wonderland Theme Park ltd is presently seeking out investors attracted to the idea of becoming involved in a project to construct the country’s first theme park on a site near Larnaca. European building companies have already expressed an interest and the American firm ITPS (International Theme Park Services) recently announced that it would play a role in promoting, organizing and running the attraction after its completion.

Conference and incentive travel: Meanwhile, to meet the needs of business tourism, another growing sector, several new conference centers are planned for the near future as an adjunct to the recently constructed, ultra-modern facility in Limassol. Joining the Euro will only accelerate this internationalist trend. Conference and incentive trips of small to medium size will also contribute to the decrease of seasonality.

Sports tourism: Training, preparation of teams is encouraged in Cyprus. It was agreed to upgrade existing sports facilities, help organize important international sports events, encourage football and soccer teams to choose Cyprus as their winter training destination.

Training for the Tourism Industry

Training is important both socially and economically. The College of Tourism and Hotel Management was founded in 1987 and admits many international students. Its main academic partnerships are with the United Kingdom, USA, Slovakia and Russia. Vocational training in hotel professions is provided by both public and private educational institutions like the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus. More than 43 000 people are employed in the hotel industry and in catering and entertainment establishments. Those are found in Limassol, Larnaka, Paphos, Lefkosie… For hotel
and tourism management, some students go overseas in countries like Switzerland and Germany. In recent years, the catering industry has employed many staff members from Poland and more recently Bulgaria and the Czech Republic.

In North Cyprus, the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, part of the Eastern Mediterranean University, offers two and four-year programmes with many internships the world over coordinated by a consulting company. EMU located in Famagusta boasts 15,000 students from around 70 different nations. In hotel management, some students chose the Business Department within the Faculty of Business and Economics established in 1986 with now over 2000 students.

Among the Greek speakers, Cyprus boats the highest ratio of university degrees per head of population in Europe. However, in tourism training, most specialists think that the system must be set on a new basis and is in need of reorganization and upgrading.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA**

**Waste Management, Energy Consumption**

Recycling, sorting out waste is a very recent trend that was only started a few months ago in Limassol. Sustainable development has only been publicized recently. For hotels, the only existing certification is that of the International Standard for Quality (iso 9001: 2000). In Paphos, the Annabelle is one of the rare hotels implementing sustainability criteria: own biological sewage plant; re-use of purified water for garden irrigation. Use of solar energy for hot-water supply, waste separation and use of returnable bottles. Automatic tailor-made air-conditioning equipment (Papakyriakou n.d.).

Another project is that of the Greek family chain of hotels Aldemar, established in Greece, Crete and Cyprus. They support NGOs and associations such as WWF, Clean up Greece, Green Globe, and Clean up the Mediterranean. Besides, solar panels are becoming more widespread in a country enjoying sunshine most of the time.

**Protection of the Natural Environment**

Cyprus is keen to diminish negative tourism externalities such as the destruction of the natural environment, pollution, noise and traffic. As 17% of the island is woodland (pin, dwarf oak,
cypress, cedar trees…) National Forest Parks extend all over the island: Troodos National Forest Parks, Cavo Gkreko, Athalassa National Forest Parks, Pedagogical Academy National Forest Parks, Rizoelia National Forest Parks, etc…

Regions devastated by open sky asbestos quarries are now reforested. Forests destroyed by fire (mainly carobs) in 1974 with the Turkish invasion account for 15% of the woodland and are being replaced with sequoias (of Canadian origin). The olive tree is a sacred tree; the carob tree is the “black gold” of Cyprus.

An action plan for the special interest product “Nature Tourism” was drafted and Cyprus offers a network of 70 nature trails -among them thematic trails, guided walking tours- which cover more than a total of 250 km. These trails are located in areas of natural beauty such as the Troodos Mountains, the Pafos and Adelphi forests, the Cape Gkreko and Athalassa national forest parks, the Pitsilia area and the Marathasa Valley.

**Protection of the Flora and Fauna**

The flora of Cyprus is unique and constitutes a truly outstanding botanical heritage. With an estimated 1800 species of flowering plants, 8% of which are found only on the island, it is a paradise for botanists. Among rare plants, the Cyprus tulip and cyclamen (the national flower), 40 species of wild orchids can be found. Endemic bird species (365) and hundreds of migrating birds use Cyprus as a stopping off point. Northwest of Paphos, an ornithological reserve (Akamas), has been set up and Birdlife Cyprus organizes field meetings throughout the year for bird watching.

Some reptiles are also very rare species.

The largest wild animal found on the island today is the mouflon, a rare type of mountain sheep unique to the island. It is strictly protected and its population has revived from near extinction to about 2000 animals at present. It is the symbol of the Republic of Cyprus and is used on its coins and is the logo of Cyprus Airways.

Marine reserves also protect the few known nesting areas of the remaining population of the Green Turtle and the loggerhead turtle. A successful conservation project was launched in 1978 in order to protect these two species. The programme, which includes a hatchery, is a model one in the Mediterranean.
In North Cyprus, Alagadi Beach is classified as a special protected area. Group of ecologists and students have been observing and helping to protect these rare animals from extinction for a number of years. About 20 diving sites exist east and west of Kyrenia where the Dive Centers have an agreement with the fishermen to leave the waters around the diving sites undisturbed.

**Water Shortages**

Throughout its long history, Cyprus has always been confronted with the problem of water shortage. Cyprus has no rivers with perennial flow while rainfall is highly variable and droughts occur frequently. With a declining trend of rainfall and snow, climatological changes and the greenhouse phenomenon, the available quantities of water for water supply and irrigation are not adequate. Each household has not always enjoyed a continuous supply of water and threat of water restrictions could cause more hardships. 180 dams were built with both positive and negative effects.

The choice of promoting golf on the island from that point of view is hardly positive. Yet, in North Cyprus, at the Korineum Golf and Country Club, the watering system is computer controlled. A special type of genetically engineered grass, “Seashore Paspalum”, was imported from the USA with an approved license and used for the first time in Europe on this project. This particular type of grass is 65% more economical in its utilization of water.

However, many more golf courses will be built to upgrade tourism. They damage the environment (example: the Secret Valley Professional Golf Course). Let us also mention the British military bases near Limassol and Larnaka where the grass is upkept for typical British sports like cricket, polo, horse racing, etc…

**SOCIAL CRITERIA**

**The Seasonal Pattern of Tourism**

All sustainable criteria of tourism concentrate on seasonality problems which need to be improved through a better distribution of arrivals throughout the year. Wonderful climatic conditions make swimming possible eight months in a year. Therefore, the peak season (July to September) could be decreased from 40 to 33%. This means better exploitation of current investments, limitation of the
need for new investments, decrease in negative impacts and less pressure on natural and human resources. This was made possible thanks to the development of all year, all weather alternative forms of tourism, among them agrotourism.

Directing tourists to the countryside means fewer of them in seaside resorts. It also means more permanent jobs on the island.

**The Spirit of Hospitality**

Traditional hospitality distinguishes the Cypriot people. “Kopiaste” means “sit down and share with us”. A hearty, friendly welcome awaits the foreigner or visitor. Being invited into their homes for local coffee or wine is normal. This tradition of hospitality was noted by Charles C. Flankland in 1827 as he recounts “… We were regaled with pipes and coffee, after which we were each presented with conserves (Macun)… then followed by excellent sherebet… next we were sprinkled with rose-water and perfumed with incense in filagree silver censers11.

Traditional hospitality is shared between North and South of the island. However, accommodation in private houses is not available in Cyprus. One doesn’t sleep in another person’s house unless a close friend totally trusted. Besides, in shops or supermarkets, welcoming the customer with a smile is not natural and has to be taught. But most employees are very receptive12.

**Multicultural Cyprus**

With a low structural unemployment rate (5.3% in 2005) Cyprus needs to resort to foreign labor, especially in the tourism industry. A diminishing yet numerous Russian community, workers from Ukraine, from Bulgaria, from many other former Eastern European countries after 2004 (admission to the European Community) make Cyprus a multi-ethnic society. At Carrefour in Limassol, only 30% of the customers are Greek Cypriots. In the tourism industry, most of them need to be bilingual.

**Social/Humanitarian Issue after the Turkish Invasion**

All of what follows contributes to the condemnation by the international community and the Turkish Cypriots themselves of the colonization of the occupied part of Cyprus: the displaced 200 000 Greek Cypriots from the occupied northern part of the island deprived of their homes and
possessions, the 1500 Greek Cypriots civilians and soldiers disappeared during the invasion, the
implantation of 115 000 Anatolian colonists settled in the occupied area, the 55 000 Turkish
Cypriots forced to emigrate because of poverty and unemployment\(^{13}\), the 20 000 -now much fewer-
ennvanced (Greek Cypriots and Maronites), the 34 000 title deeds given to settlers from Turkey since
1974\(^{14}\) as well as the thousands of workers crossing the Ledra Palace check point every day to work
in the south for better pay. The European Court of Human Rights found Turkey guilty of continuing
gross violations of human rights in Cyprus. The impact on the tourism industry is important from a
social viewpoint and because many tourist buildings are constructed on land owned by Greek
Cypriots.

**Influence of Casinos in North Cyprus**

Many casinos exist in the occupied part of Cyprus, most of them in Kyrenia, a few in Nicosia. The
impact of casinos on the numerous student population was studied by the Eastern Mediterranean
University (Mehmet, Biçak, 2005). Other studies are being carried out for the social impact and for
the economic impact on the tourist sector and the wider economy from the potential creation of
casinos in Cyprus (Cyprus Tourism Organization, 2005).

**CULTURAL CRITERIA**

**The historical Heritage**

The island cultural heritage reaches back to the 9\(^{th}\) millennium BC. Antique sites of Paphos and
Choirokoitia, ten churches of Byzantine art near Troodos are listed UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

*The impact of the Turkish invasion:* The island’s cultural heritage has been systematically and
deliberately destroyed in the occupied areas. Byzantine churches, monuments and antiquities were
destroyed or looted and many items were smuggled abroad. The illegal regime in the occupied area
has pursued a deliberate policy aimed at destroying and plundering the ancient cultural and
historical heritage of the island as part of a wider goal to turkify the island and erases all evidence of
its Cypriot character\(^{15}\). From Greek sources (Presse and Information Office, 2006) as a
consequence of Turkey’s policy and illegal actions: at least 55 churches have been converted into
mosques; another 50 churches and monasteries have been converted into stables, stores, military
barracks, hostels, museums or have been demolished; the cemeteries of at least 25 villages have been desecrated and destroyed; innumerable icons, religious artefacts and all kinds of archaeological treasures have been stolen and smuggled abroad; illegal excavations and smuggling of antiquities is openly taking place all the time with the involvement of the occupying forces; all Greek place names contrary to all historical and cultural reason were converted into Turkish ones. Today, great efforts are being made to recover stolen items (icons, frescoes, mosaics, texts and artefacts) especially from the USA and Germany.

**Protection of North Cyprus:** Two major cultural centers, Kyriena and Famagusta, are now occupied. In Kyriena, the Abbaye was not looted and the castle is being restored and refurbished… The European Community will help restore the gothic cathedral in Famagusta, damaged by salt and the ruins of a Venetian palace. During British rule already much of the architectural heritage of the city was lost when stone was taken from many of the historical sites to aid in the building of the Suez Canal. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) restored the historical Bedestan of Nicosia.

In contrast to the total disrespect shown by the occupation regime, all Muslim sites in the area controlled by the Government of Cyprus are properly and respectfully kept, preserved and maintained by the competent authorities.

**Popular Culture: Arts and Crafts**

*Traditional crafts:* To remedy the downgrading of the traditional cultural character of Cyprus, classes are organized to teach the traditional craftwork and revive the interest and a Handi-craft Center has opened in Nicosia, run by the government. The Handicrafts range from ceramic pots, carved wooden chairs or chests, basketware, silverware, copperware and embroidery products. Lefkara lace, pottery of Fini and Kornos, Phyté weaving, scarves, traditional costumes and leather work of Cyprus are all well-known and created a wealth of traditions in folk art.

*Artistic events:* They take place throughout the year and cover all areas of Cyprus: e.g. Pafos Aphrodite Festival, International Festival “Kypria 2007”: musical recitals, theatre in Curium, festivals, concerts and exhibitions are also offered in North Cyprus: Güzelyurt Orange Festival,
Food and Wine

Food is one of the basic aspects of our tourist product and forms an integral part of the tourist experience. For many centuries bread, oil and wine constituted the ingredients of daily fare. The first records indicate that in prehistoric times only few and poor ingredients were available. Shipping, journey, wars, colonies conquerors and expeditions eventually brought the Cypriots in contact with new civilizations and, as a result, new ingredients and techniques influenced the local food customs. Indeed, the earliest evidence of human presence on the island is associated with food. This is the site of “Episkopi-Aetokremmon” where remains of pygmy hippopotami have been found in association with art crafts dating around 8500 BC.

As for wine-making, it goes back to at least 2000 BC and in the past Cyprus’s wine was considered to be so delectable that the Pharaohs of Egypt ordered it and its fine quality did not go unnoticed by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Mosaics at the House of Dionysus in Paphos are an excellent example of the colourful history of the Cyprus wine and a panel in the West Gallery relates its mythological origins. Dionysus, the pleasure-loving God who taught Icarius how to plant vines in exchange for the hospitality he had shown to him is seated on a chair holding grapes. An inscription in Greek that reads “the first wine drinker” accompanies a mosaic of two shepherds quite drunk on Icarius’s wine. Many renowned wines of the world are made from vines brought to Europe from Cyprus after the Crusades. Today, no Cypriot wine enjoys greater reputation than Commandaria, a sweet, robust dessert wine. No one seems quite sure how old this honey-sweet red wine is. Certainly, it is a great deal older than its name, which dates only from about 1191.

The Cyprus Tourism Organization, within the framework of the Strategic Tourism Plan, and in cooperation with the Higher Hotel Institute has compiled a project called “VAKHIS” which aims at the adoption, use and promotion of Cypriot traditional authentic cuisine by local taverns which operate either independently or within traditional hotel enterprises. The project has been named after a famous Cypriot chef called Vakhis who lived in the ancient city of Kition around 300 AD.
It is purely voluntary and is supported by Eurotoques International and the Association of Cypriot Chefs and provides the opportunity to all entrepreneurs who serve local cuisine and meet the strict standards of the programme to obtain Cyprus Tourism Organization’s quality certificate for authentic cuisine, while there is a respective obligation by the Cyprus Tourism Organization to promote these establishments in a special guide and in other information or promotional leaflets as well as in the website of the organization. The certificate is by itself an important promo tool for the tavern. A special committee consisting of representatives of Cyprus Tourism Organization, the Higher Hotel Institute, Eurotoques International and the Association of Cyprus Chefs has been set up to supervise the implementation of the project.

Up until thirty years ago, all the wine was made from just two grape types: Mavro, a black grape for red wine and Xynisteri for white wine. Since the 1950’s the government has introduced a range of new grapes to Cyprus and the customer can now choose between a large range of wines from light sparkling whites to full bodied red wines. The vast majority of grapes grown in Cyprus are processed by four large ultra-modern wineries in Limassol – Keo, Etko, Loel and Sodap.

Wine festivals take place in September every year. Limassol stages some of the island’s best-known festivals: the annual wine festival in September, when the various wineries offer free samples of their products for ten days. The wine festival was organized for the first time in 1961 and since then it has become an established annual event of merrymaking and fun, offering a joyful atmosphere to visitors from all over Cyprus and abroad. Wine from the barrels is on offer free of charge every evening.

The wine producing villages (Krassochoria) such as Vasa, Koilani, Omodos, North of Limassol, on the southern slopes of the Troodos Mountain Range are very popular. Gourmets will particularly appreciate what Cyprus has to offer, as Cyprus cuisine consists of dishes very rich in taste and unique in specialities. Within the very large range of the Cyprus cuisine, the three favourites are: mezé, tava and stifado. Meal times are more influenced by the British than the Greeks; dinner time is around 7 pm but taverns will open later. Many products are imported from Greece and no product of Turkey will ever be served in the South of the island.
CYPRUS COVERAGE BY TOUR OPERATORS

Generalists Tour Operators

The offer is geared to cultural tourism or sand and sea tourism, including golf, spa/thalasso. No emphasis is put on the economy of Cyprus, education/training in Cyprus, agrotourism (no visit of those villages); the wine route and wine tasting are not developed. In Limassol, a tour to one of the wineries can easily be arranged in order to witness production and taste the final product. But, this is not offered spontaneously or on tours. Cyprus North is part of some organized tours; only Kyrenia is offered. Guides tend to be biased in their explanations. A fair picture is impossible to grasp for the tourist.

Specialized Tours Operators

The offer is mainly concentrated on hiking for example with Allibert, Arvel, Chamina Sylva, La Burle, Montagne Evasion, Terres d’Aventure. All of them alternate hiking with the discovery of Cypriot culture and patrimony.

As for guidebooks, a study on Cyprus (Swarbrooke, 1999) shows that “alternative” guidebooks take a more pro-active stance on sustainability issues than traditional ones: they show a conservation-oriented approach to wildlife, have specific sections on loggerhead turtles, mention the environmental damage caused by building golf curses, and better describe the implications of the Turkish invasion.

CONCLUSION

Because of their specific features (isolation, significant sea shores, difficult access, scattering, limited natural resources, prone to cultural disasters, large imports, etc…) islands and small island states need to be protected. They represent case studies regarding sustainable tourism, just like arid zones and mountainous regions. This article takes Cyprus as an example to assess positive and negative aspects which, from a tourist point of view, characterize each of the traditional pillars of sustainability: social, environmental and economic, including patrimonial and cultural. The appraisal as described is largely positive.

Cyprus, indeed, meets the aim of both the agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism such as described by the Tourism Sustainability Group Report (Tourism Sustainability
Group, 2007) and the World Tourism Organization with its fresh approaches to tourism development in the Mediterranean (World Tourism Organization -UNWTO-, 2000). The integration of tourism into sustainable, quality island development is in keeping with island conditions; it designs and develops in Cyprus tourism that draws on local assets, well integrated economically, culturally and environmentally with these assets, supports local employment and economic sectors; it combines the concepts of quality and sustainability in the medium and long terms. This, in their view, holds the key to competitiveness of a destination and its tourism facilities.

Consideration is given to Cyprus’s own characteristics and development level. It rests on the island’s assets (natural and cultural resources), peculiarities and capacities; it integrates a diversified supply of attractions. This enables Cyprus to extend its season and select the most appropriate segments of tourist demand. This in the view of the European Commission is likely to lead to economic prosperity, social equity and cohesion, environmental and cultural protection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>GNP (m.$)</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th>GNP/Capita</th>
<th>Inflation Rate</th>
<th>Exports (m.$)</th>
<th>Imports (m.$)</th>
<th>Trade Balance (m.$)</th>
<th>Export/Import (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORTH CYPRUS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>218,066</td>
<td>1,602.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>853.1</td>
<td>-791.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH CYPRUS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>713,000</td>
<td>12,436.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>17,828</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>918.1</td>
<td>3,988.4</td>
<td>-3,070.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Basic Economic and Tourism Indicators (Continues)

### Table 2. Main Tourism Indicators of North and South Cyprus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NORTH CYPRUS</th>
<th>SOUTH CYPRUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years</strong></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist Establishments</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bed Capacity</strong></td>
<td>12,222</td>
<td>96,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overnight Stay of Tourists (000)</strong></td>
<td>1,523</td>
<td>13,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist Arrivals (000)</strong></td>
<td>306</td>
<td>2,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Stay</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Utilization Rate</strong></td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism Revenues (m $)</strong></td>
<td>271.1</td>
<td>1,891.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sustainable Tourism with Special Reference to Islands and Small States, "Perceptions of Local Community on Costs and Benefits of Tourism in North Cyprus", prepared by Professor, Dr Mehmet Altinay, Professor, Dr Hasan Ali Biçak, Professor, Dr Turgut Var, Mr. Mehmet Basel, 25-27 May 2006, Malta*
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- Savvas Adamides, Director, the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Nicosia
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- Athena Metaxas, Technical Officer, Architect; Anna Chazalambous – informationcentercto.org.cy, Phoebe Katsouris, Miranda Ioannou, Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO), Nicosia
- Evie Panayiotou, Cyprus Agrotourism Company, Nicosia
- MBA Business School, Λεωφορεία Λαρυμνίς, Καιριό Δορίφορος, Leaforos Larnatos, Ktirio Doriforos (Building), Hurmuz Ruzgar (hurmuz.ruzgar@emu.edu.tr)
- Adonis Papakyriakou, Annabelle Hotel, Pafos
- Société chypriote de vacances en gîte rural, www.agrotourism.com.cy
- West End Travel Cy Ltd, M. Chussie, Limassol

1 “Green Line” for the UN, called “Attila line” by Turks
2 The blue flag is an exclusive eco-label awarded to beaches which fulfil certain criteria relating to Environmental Education and Information, Beach Area Management, Quality of the Bathing Water according to the relevant EU Directive and Safety
3 www.agrotourism.com.cy, email: helpdesk@agrotourism.com.cy, Cyprus Holiday Society with rural accommodation
4 Icet.org, October 2006, with presentations on “Kykko Monastery as a religious attraction” (by the director of the Kykko Museum) and “on the footsteps of St Paul in Pafos” (by the CCI of Paphos)
5 CTO (Cyprus Tourism Organization) survey, 2005. They account for about 13% of the country’s gainfully employed population
6 Nicolas Angelopoulos received Kuoni’s Green Planet Award for five consecutive years www.aldemarhotels.com
7 www.birdlifecyprus.org
8 You can receive a two-year prison sentence for killing a mouflon. The mouflon should not be confused with mountain goats used for food and skin and which do not belong to the Geneva 1985 Convention for restricted or endangered species
9 60 cm of snow in 2006/07 while it could reach 4 meters in the past. Cyprus enjoys 340 days of sunshine a year
10 The negative effects are on the scarcity of fish and on the humidity destroying valuable chapel frescoes
11 One of the most well-known expressions is “a single cup of coffee is remembered with respect for forty years”.
12 Interview with Carrefour, just established in Limassol, March 2007: Alain Boccard, Marketing Director; Alain Goanvec, Managing Director
13 They now make up only 11% if the native population. The total number of Turkish troops and settlers is now greater than that of the Turkish Cypriots remaining
14 More than half of Northern Cyprus. Source: Turkish Cypriot daily “Arupa”, 26/03/01
15 Abundant evidence gathered from foreign and Turkish Cypriot press, as well as evidence obtained from other authoritative sources (Jacques Delibard’s UNESCO report), demonstrate the magnitude of the damage and destruction caused to the cultural heritage of Cyprus.
16 Created by the Cyprus Handicraft Service in 1979
17 Among the dry white: Amathus, Kolossi, Bellapais, Aphrodite, Arsinoë; among the red: Olympus, Kikko, Salamis, Kolossi, Ahera, Keo Claret and rosé wines such as Amorosa, Rosella, Rose Lady
18 “mezé”, a rich collection of more than 20 different appetizers and savouries, “tava”, a lamb stew with plenty of onions and tomatoes. “stifado”, a stew of beef or hare, cooked with wine, vinegar, onion and spices
19 Golf is part of the Merilia offer and Mille et un Soleils in France
20 Wine in taverns is served in a carafe and no mention of any brand or origin is visible to a tourist


Mehmet, A. (Professor, Dr) & Hasan, AB. (Professor, Dr), Turgut, V. (Professor) & Mehmet, B. - prepared by. (2006). Perceptions of local community on costs and benefits of tourism in North Cyprus, *conference on Sustainable Tourism with Special Reference to Islands and Small States*, Malta


Papakyriakou, Adonis. (n.d.) Source: *Touristik Union International GmbH & Co. KG.*


