

Waterloss project:

Event organised by the Water Board of Nicosia on the 22nd of March 2011

On 22nd March 2011, the Water Board of Nicosia, in the frame of the progress of the Med project, organised a one day workshop under the title:

Water Board of Nicosia
“Workshop – Quality and safety of potable water
WATERLOSS – MED 2G-MED09-445
Management of water losses in a drinking water supply system”

to inform technical people, the consumers and the general public about the needs and expectations of the project and to exchange views on matters related to water loss. The language of the workshop was Greek.

More than 600 people were invited to participate and about 130 (including presenters) participated in the workshop.

The Minister of Agriculture and the Nicosia District Officer addressed the workshop.

The conclusions have been disseminated to the members of parliament, ministries, water organisations and to the participants. The presentations and the conclusions have been posted on <http://www.wbn.org.cy/> the site of the Water Board of Nicosia

For the needs of the project a research was carried out using a questionnaire with 23 statements related to water management where the respondents were asked to mark their agreement on each statement. The responses are now assessed in order to conclude about how Cypriots prioritise the various issues relating to water. The results will be presented during the 3rd meeting of the steering committee of the Waterloss Med project.

The managers and staff from other Water Boards and the Water Development Department in Cyprus participated actively in the coordination of the workshop.

The workshop was organised under 3 thematic units for the 12 presentations and one unit for discussion and conclusions as follows:

1. Water Security – Institutional requirements
 - International Perspective
 - Roles and responsibilities – legal aspects and European Directive
 - Water inspection and health
 - Water Network monitoring and security

2. Production and management of water quality
 - The water issue in Cyprus
 - The role of the national laboratory
 - Water quality control
 - Research project WATERLOSS-water management system in networks
 - Chemical and microbiological analysis of Water-Management and water use by consumers-Disinfecting water

3. Water quality and consumers
 - Human activity and deterioration in the quality of drinking water
 - Intervention by Consumers' Council representative
 - Investigation of water consumption at St. Varnavas High School
4. Questions - discussion- conclusions
 - exchange of views

Scientists, experts, water people, the Environmental Commissioner and representatives from the academic and research field, the private and the public sector, the Cyprus Consumers' Association and high school students presented their topic in the workshop and exchanged views on the critical matters of water losses and water scarcity and their relation to security and water quality.

The discussion during the workshop pointed the following:

- Quality, security and management of waterloss in a network are interrelated.
- A message that need to be conveyed is that water produced and supplied through the water works and managed by water authorities is of high quality and suitable for potable human use.
- The system of distribution pipes of potable water should be continually monitored. This effort can be facilitated by sensors and meters installed in the water pipe system for qualitative and quantitative issues.
- The amount of physical water losses in the pipe network affects the quality of supplied water. Reduction of the level of water losses will result in an improvement in the water quality.
- Water that is provided by the Water Works and managed by the Government of Cyprus is safe. It is checked through laboratory checks by state organizations from production up to the consumer private house connection (water meter), i.e Government Laboratories, Health Services of the Ministry of Health and of the individual local authorities and moreover by private laboratories that the 3 Water Boards are contracted with.
- Consumers need to be informed that both the public network and the private water system and storage tanks need to be inspected, cleaned and disinfected at least once a year. Furthermore, the in house plumbing and piping dead-ends should be flushed and washed-out. It is important that consumers need to clean and disinfect potable cold water fridges and the bottles used.
- Sources of contamination of underground water are underground sewers, domestic litter dumps, overuse of agricultural pesticides and animal stock breeding.
- In Cyprus, no epidemics have ever been caused by unclean water.

The respondents to the questionnaire consider that the problem of waterloss is mainly technical and economical. It is also an environmental problem.

They consider that the two best methods to lower the water losses are:

- a) the preventive maintenance of the network,
- b) the quick response in repairing the pipes damaged and
- c) the lowering of pressure in the network.

Quality of water is considered as the most important indicator of water management in a network. Second important indicator is the security of the infrastructure and third the quantity of water lost.

The level of management of water depends mainly on the know how of the personnel managing the network. The age of the network and the quality of water are the next two important parameters. The quantity of waterloss and the number of leakages follow. Also, important parameters are considered the expenditure for maintaining the network and the degree of consumer satisfaction as well as the total cost of water per cubic meter. At a lower degree the level of water management is assessed from the number of claims from the consumers and the energy consumption.

Almost all citizens consider that the sensitivity of people to waterloss issues will help the Water Board of Nicosia to improve the services they offer.

60% of the respondents consider that the lowering of the quality of water will lead to the loss of serious quantities of water.

Although the water offered is of high level quality only 63% of the respondents use the supplied water for drinking.

A proportion of 65% of the respondents consider that the price of water in Cyprus is low.