

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2015

OEB IN EUROPE

OEB executives have attended specialised seminars and conferences in Europe and were active at EU employer and business decision-making centres. Among others, OEB was particularly active in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the board of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). In addition, OEB has also participated in selected European programmes and specialised advisory groups of the European Commission.

European Economic and Social Committee

EESC is the most important advisory body of the EU, representing the interests of civil society through three interest groups: employers, employees and other civil society groups. EESC is a forum and the institutional basis enabling various financial and civil institutions of the Member-states to actively participate in the decision-making process. Cyprus is represented with five delegates, one of which is the Assistant Director General of OEB Mr Michael Antoniou.

The main topics discussed in 2015 included:

- The integration of immigrants into the labour market.
- Initiative for youth employment.
- Completion of EMU.
- Fostering creativity, entrepreneurship and mobility in the field of training and education.
- Guidelines for employment.
- Continuing vocational education and training (CVET).
- Qualifications Certification - non-formal and informal learning.
- Principles for effective and reliable welfare systems

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

OEB participated in the annual International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland between the 31st May and 13th of June 2015. The main topic on the agenda was *Facilitating Transition from the Informal to Formal Economy*. Other topics discussed included a reviewing of the Forced Labour Convention to address implementation gaps, and the recurrent discussion on the Strategic Objective of Employment.

Head of OEB's delegation was the Director General and board member of the ILO, Mr. Michael Pilikos accompanied by the Assistant Director General Mr. Michael Antoniou and Industrial Relations Officer Mr. Theodoros Giannakis.

OEB has been representing Cypriot employers to the ILO continuously since 1960, the year the Republic of Cyprus became a member.

International Organisation of Employers (IOE)

OEB is the sole employer organisation representing the interests of Cypriot businesses to IOE. As the most representative worldwide employer organisation, IOE represents the interests of its members around the globe. OEB's Director General is a member of ILO's Council which in 2015 discussed the Application of the ILO Conventions, moving from Informal Economy to Formal, creating decent and productive jobs in SMEs, climatic change and the impact on businesses, health and safety at work.

BUSINESSEUROPE

OEB is the sole employer organisation representing the interests of Cypriot businesses to BUSINESSEUROPE, the most representative European employer organisation that includes among its membership 39 organisations from 33 countries.

In 2015 OEB's President and Director General, as members of BUSINESSEUROPE's Council of Presidents and Executive Committee respectively, discussed the Report of the Director General, Economy in EU states, Europe's International Relations, Terrorism and its effects on economy.

Current target issues of BUSINESSEUROPE are:

- Digital Economy.
- International Trade and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).
- Competitiveness of European Industry.
- Climatic Change.
- Energy Policy of the EU.

BUSINESSMED

BUSINESSMED's Chairman Mr. Jacques Jean Sarraf visited Cyprus and met with the Chairman of OEB, Mr. Christos Michaelides. During the meeting the two parties agreed to strengthen relations in order to promote cooperation between companies from the Mediterranean region.

Common belief of both sides is that Cyprus is offered as a destination with political stability for investment and development of new partnerships between businesses and states of the Mediterranean region in areas such as industry, trade, services and tourism.

IMPORTANT MEETING OF MEDITERRANEAN ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF OEB

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Barcelona Process for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Mediterranean business organisations met in Barcelona for an event under the topic: "Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders".

OEB as a founding member of the Union of Mediterranean Employers and Business Associations (BUSINESSMED) participated in the meeting with its Chairman Mr Christos Michaelides and Deputy Director General Mr Costas Christofides.

TROIKA – Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Throughout 2015 OEB continued to support the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Cyprus and the international lenders, in particular as regards the part of fiscal consolidation and reforms. OEB's positions and proposals in relation to the implementation of the Memorandum were developed and promoted during a number of meetings that were held between OEB's officials and the Troika.

Despite significant outstanding issues that exist in relation to the implementation of the program, in 2015 progress was recorded as well as positive growth for the first time since the onset of the economic crisis. Briefly, by the end of 2015:

- The process of privatization of CYTA and EAC is frozen due to reactions of the trade unions which despite the satisfaction of almost all their claims related to labour and pension benefits of their members, still refuse to accept the implementation of the process. However there was significant progress in the privatisation process of state ports.
- Although non-performing loans remain a major challenge for the banking sector, progress has been made with several borrowers have to restructure their loans in cooperation with banks. Further improvement of the situation is expected in 2016.
- Improvement of the application method for the Guaranteed Minimum Income, a measure strongly supported by OEB and which reinforced the rationalization of the social benefits system through better and more effective targeting and resource saving.
- There has been progress in the rationalisation of the state payroll through the elaboration of a proposed salary increase formula, although the process is yet to be completed.
- OEB continues to be engaged with all individual aspects of the Memorandum and stresses at every opportunity the need to complete the required reforms stated in the program.

THE ECONOMY

For the first time since 2012, the economic growth in 2015 was positive around 1.5%, in real terms, compared with a negative rate of -2.5 % in 2014, -5.9 % in 2013 and -2.5% in 2012. The positive performance of the economy is a result of positive growth rates in almost all sectors of economic activity.

The harmonized inflation rate in 2015, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, dropped to -1.5% compared to -0.3 % in 2014. The decelerated inflation is mainly attributed to the reduction of prices in almost all economic sectors.

The uptrend of the economy is reflected in the labour market, resulting in a decrease in the unemployment rate to 15% as compared to 16.2% in 2014.

Fiscal deficit for 2015 stood at 0.5 % of the GDP, compared with a deficit of 0.2 % in 2014.

During 2015, exports of goods to EU member states rose by 15.1% and by 25% to all other countries compared to 2014.

Cyprus Innovation Award

The ninth Cyprus Innovation Award competition was concluded successfully in March 2015. A total of 31 applications from all sectors of economic activity were received and the four winners were the following:

- **Primary Sector: Alion Vegetables & Fruit Co Ltd** for the production and distribution of the fresh vegetable Kale in the category of superfoods for the first time in the Cyprus market.
- **Manufacturing Sector: Advanced Automation Systems Ltd** for the design and development of the fastest production line drip irrigation pipe in the world.
- **Services Sector: Demetriades Hydraulics Ltd** for the development of an innovative mobile radio-controlled waterjet drive for use in industry and industrial shipping.
- **Public Sector: State General Laboratory** for Isotopic mapping of Cypriot food and drinks for the creation of databases in order to certify their authenticity.

The Innovation Awards were presented by the Minister of Finance, Mr Harris Georgiades, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Anastasiades during a special ceremony held on November 23, 2015.

Trade and Business Partnerships

In 2015 OEB promoted trade and business partnerships through:

- Promotion of collaborations of its Member Associations with their counterparts in other countries.
- Conducted a survey among its member companies for the evaluation of services provided to its members as well as of measuring the economic crisis impact.
- Participation in official missions aimed at promoting Cyprus as an international business centre.
- Organisation of the SavEnergy, the Envirotec Water and Environment Technologies and the Education Exhibitions.
- Briefed Members on Government announced grant schemes.
- Cooperated and maintained communication with the Republic's commercial attachés, foreign businessmen, ambassadors and journalists to promote Cypriot commercial interests.

OEB Energy Committee

OEB's Energy Committee met regularly and examined a number of important issues in 2015, including:

- Grant schemes for investments in renewable and energy saving technologies
- Bills and draft bills concerning the energy market
- SavEnergy 2015 Exhibition
- Sustainability of the Renewable Energy Special Fund
- Energy market regulations
- Preparation of a comprehensive memorandum for the energy sector.

The Energy Committee of OEB also met with the President and Members of the Cyprus Energy Regulatory Authority, the Director General of the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, as well as other relevant state officials.

Services Sector

The wider Services sector, including financial services, presented positive growth in 2015.

OEB's membership and participation to BUSINESSEUROPE contributes significantly to the promotion of Cyprus as an international and regional business centre. OEB promotes the competitive advantages of Cypriot businesses, especially in services, at European fora where the prospect of full trade liberalisation between Mediterranean countries is discussed.

Tourism

Tourist arrivals in 2015 increased to 2.659.4 million from 2.441.2 million in 2014 or by 8.9%. In 2015, arrivals from the United Kingdom increased to 1.04 million (from 871,000 in 2014) whereas arrivals from the Russian Federation decreased to 525,000 (from 636,000 in 2014).

The increase in tourist arrivals resulted in increased income from tourism in 2015 which rose to €2,112. million (from €2,023 million in 2014), marking a 14.4% increase.

Through meetings with government officials, the parliamentary parties and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO), OEB supported and promoted the rapid implementation of measures to boost tourism specified within CTO's strategic plan.

Industry

The growth rate of the manufacturing sector rose by 2.2% in 2015 compared with a negative rate of 2% in 2014. The contribution to GDP in 2015 remained at 4.6% which is the same level as the year before.

Despite deteriorating conditions, OEB still considers the manufacturing sector as a key factor for sustained

economic growth while maintaining competitiveness and employment levels is crucial. The following were among the issues raised and promoted by OEB in 2015:

- Cost containment, especially with regard to inelastic expenditure such as electricity, water and council tax.
- Employment and training schemes funded by the government and the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA).
- Securing more funding for industry from national and EU sources.
- The continuing participation of Cypriot industries in specialised international trade exhibitions to improve exports and penetrate new markets.

Agriculture

The Agriculture Sector rose in 2015 by 1.5% (-6.7% in 2014). The sector's contribution to GDP was 1.9%, which is the average between 2011-2015.

Despite the sector's good performance, in 2015 exports decreased by €8.4 million, reaching €89.3 million mainly due to reduced potato and citrus exports.

Other Economic And Business Activities

Within the context of promoting the interests of its Members, OEB provided numerous and multifaceted services to enterprises and organisations through active participation and lobbying at all joint Committees, Councils and other relevant bodies.

OEB's executives play a crucial role in the smooth and productive operation of Professional Associations. The services provided, among others, include:

- Active participation in the work of the Professional Associations' Boards, helping them draft and formulate policies.
- Promotion and implementation of the Boards' decisions.
- Organisation of international business missions.
- Representation of Professional Associations at various regional and international conferences.
- Lobbying to Ministries, the House of Representatives and other relevant authorities and bodies.
- Conducting sector-specific research to identify problems and formulate policy.
- Representing Professional Associations in parliamentary committees as well as in committees of various ministries and semi-governmental organisations.

Furthermore, as part of the promotion of OEB's activities and positions, executives of OEB:

- Participated in numerous television and radio shows to discuss economic issues.
- Assisted Members in utilising national and EU funding schemes.
- Publicised OEB's positions in local and international media.

LABOUR RELATIONS AND SOCIAL POLICY INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2015 the global financial crisis continued to adversely affect the Cyprus economy and to determine developments in industrial relations and social policy.

The year 2015 reflected the impact of the unprecedented Eurogroup decision of March 15, 2013 for a "haircut" on bank deposits (bail-in), and the enormous efforts of all productive forces of the country to properly manage the situation, especially in relation to the gradual restoration of credibility in the Cyprus banking system, the lack of liquidity of Cypriot businesses and the problems encountered by businesses in relation to the restructuring of their debts and the high cost of borrowing.

Additionally, 2015 was marked by the closing down of Cyprus Airways, after the European Commission's Competition Directorate decision that the state aid received by the company in previous years was illegal and should be returned.

Reductions in the price of electricity (approximately 24% in 2015) combined with the continued decline in world prices of Brent crude oil and the consequent reduction of fuel in Cyprus (unleaded gasoline, diesel fuel, heating oil, kerosene), had a positive impact on businesses and households.

There was a positive rate of growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 1.5% after three consecutive years of decrease, while the inflation rate for 2015 stood at -2.1%, completing three consecutive years of deflationary pressures.

With unemployment gradually reduced and stabilized at relatively high levels for Cyprus standards (15.5% in 2015) and extension of the financial crisis, OEB adapted its objectives and strategy aiming at supporting and assisting businesses to ensure their sustainability.

Particular emphasis was placed by OEB in business support and problem solving related to the aforementioned developments, the peaceful renewal of collective agreements with retention and reduction of labour costs, reduction of unemployment and promotion of further measures to tackle the crisis and

rationalize public expenditure.

Through a comprehensive approach, OEB lodged a number of feasible suggestions for the modernization of the state and support of individual economic sectors. Additionally, OEB strongly supported the liberalisation of the retail shop opening hours, outsourcing from the public to the private sector in order to stimulate the economy, provision of incentives for use of renewable energy sources, support for research and innovation and attracting foreign investors.

A main priority for OEB was the faithful implementation of the provisions stated in the Memorandum between the Republic and the Troika in order to successfully complete the support program of the Cyprus economy.

LABOUR DEMANDS AND COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

The negotiating cycle of 2015 had the following main characteristics:

- It concerned the renewal of individual company collective agreements and six major sectors. Specifically, at the end of 2014 the following sectoral agreements and / or "Special Arrangements" had expired: Master printers, Mosaic industry, Woodworking industry, Importers of Motor Vehicles, Shipping Agents (dockers and clerical staff), Citrus Exporters. Additionally, the agreement for the construction industry ended on 30/06/2015 and for the Hotel Industry on 31/12/2015.
- It is also noted that in 2015 negotiations were still underway for the collective agreements in Metal industry, Electrical Installations sector, and the Newspaper Publishers of which the first two ended on 31/12/2012 and the last on 31/12/2013. Note that the companies operating in these sectors have negotiated with the trade unions and have made arrangements to reduce labour costs at a company level.
- Trade unions displayed willingness to cooperate in order to reduce labour costs and limit redundancies.
- In 2015 industrial peace was not disturbed due to failure to renew collective agreements. However, there were strikes in the semi-governmental organisations, against their privatisation. Especially in ports, strikes resulted in the paralysis of economic activity and damage to businesses and the economy in general. OEB repeatedly called on the state to promote effective mechanisms for regulating the exercise of the right to strike in all essential services in order to ensure the proper functioning of economic and social activity.
- In some cases, contracts were not renewed and therefore they still remained under negotiation until the beginning of 2016. In most cases however, specific agreements were concluded to maintain the reduction of labour costs.

The New Negotiating Cycle

The new round of negotiations concerns the renewal of collective agreements for a number of individual companies and major sectors of the economy. Specifically, during the period 30/6/2015 - 31/12/2015 the Collective Agreements and / or "Special Arrangements" of the following sectors had ended:

- Construction industry
- Hotel industry
- Mosaics and Marbles
- Master printers
- Shipping Agents (Dockers / markers and Clerical Staff)
- Metal industry
- Contractors of Electrical Installations
- Private Hospitals

SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

OEB's effort on health and safety issues at work, focuses primarily on informing and assisting its members on the proper application of the *acquis communautaire* as integrated into the national legislation. Various initiatives have been undertaken in this direction, particularly through seminars involving employers and senior executives.

The legislative framework imposes a series of obligations on employers and especially conducting a written risk assessment in the workplace and establishment of preventive measures for the avoidance and treatment of occupational accidents and diseases.

STRIKES

The number of strikes that took place during 2015 recorded a decrease compared with the strikes carried out during 2014 (2014: 43 vs 2015: 30) while lost workdays decreased by 55% (2014: 29670 vs 2015: 13224). Note that most of the lost workdays (8400 of 13224 workdays) in 2015 were strikes in the British Military Bases.

A significant reduction, 73% was recorded in the number of affected employees (2014: 23,741 vs 2015: 6393). Out of the 30 strikes recorded in 2015, 15 concerned the private sector and the remaining 15 concerned government and semi-government sector.

STRIKES IN ESSENTIAL SERVICES

In 2015 there were several strikes in organisations undergoing the privatisation process, and especially the ports. Particularly problematic was the way some unions behaved in these organizations, repeatedly demonstrating their unwillingness to respect labour norms and implement the signed agreements.

With the exception of airports and air traffic control for which effective legislation passed in March 2012, Unions in all other areas of essential services may paralyse activities affecting state and society, until their demands are accepted.

OEB does not deny the constitutional right to strike, and has launched in 2015 its proposal for Legislative regulation of the right to strike in essential services in order to protect the proper and smooth functioning of the economy. For this purpose, a draft bill was prepared which was submitted to the President of the Republic and the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Security for processing and forwarding to Parliament for enactment.

The aim of OEB is to protect the state against unaccountable behaviour. The proposed bill introduced by OEB is fully harmonized with two key aspects: it incorporates the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) guidelines and instructions on the issue, and it leaves the existing industrial relations system of our country intact, allowing the use of strike for the reasons allowed by the Industrial Relations Code while in all other cases of labour dispute it provides binding mandatory arbitration, as required by the Code.

The repeated and uncontrolled abuse of the right to strike by a section of the trade union movement makes the need for legal regulation of the issue imperative. Efforts to adopt OEB's proposal will continue in 2016.

FOREIGN LABOUR

During 2015 the restrictive policy issuing employment permits for third country nationals continued (until the preparation of this report there were no final statistics for the year 2015, indicating that the relative number of licenses in 2014 was 5066 not including the maids). The permits relate mostly to agriculture and financial institutions. There was reduction in the number of licenses for the manufacturing and construction sectors.

OEB repeatedly indicated that foreign workers are employed in jobs for which Cypriots and Community workers do not show any interest (such as the broader sector of agriculture and livestock) or in new areas, such as in the Forex sector that requires language skills Cypriots and Community workers do not possess.

Furthermore OEB did not fail to point out the positive influence of foreigners employed in productive sectors of the economy and stressed the need to fight against illegal and undeclared work which primarily affects legitimate businesses and the economy as a whole.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment decreased slightly (8.6%) in 2015 compared to 2014, with the average number of unemployed reaching 43,159 people (47,197 in 2014). Based on the data (adjusted for seasonal fluctuations) registered unemployed persons in December 2015 amounted to 42,361 (45,742 in December 2014). The unemployment rate in December 2015 stood at 15.7% compared to 16.4% in December 2014. OEB considers unemployment the biggest challenge of our country.

Despite the reduction, OEB is concerned about the unemployment rate still remaining very high. In 2015 concrete proposals to boost employment were submitted. These proposals have none or low cost, and include the relaunching, improvement and expansion of various employment support schemes, the exemption from employer contributions to various state funds for employees under the age of 25 in order to encourage the employment of this age group, permanent extension of shop opening hours for and outsourcing from public to private sector.

Businesses continue to face the consequences of limited economic activity, reduced turnover, high cost of borrowing and the impact of forced participation in the rescue of the financial system in 2013. OEB believes that a substantial reduction in unemployment will only occur through the gradual return of the economy to sustainable development conditions and efforts are directed towards policy formulation.

MINIMUM WAGE

The Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB) maintains the consistent position on abolition of the minimum wage which is above the Cyprus economic capabilities as it approaches minimum wages of other much more economically robust countries and acts as a serious disincentive to create new jobs.

During 2015, no new decree was issued to modify the amount of the minimum wage, therefore the last decree issued in 2012 remains in force.

Specifically, the minimum recruitment salaries for clerks, salesmen, caregivers, nurses and school assistants, child carers and childminders remained at € 870 per month as starting salary and € 924 for persons who complete 6-month continuous service with the same employer.

Regarding guards, the hourly rate remained at € 4,90 in recruitment and € 5,20 after 6 months' service with the same employer, while cleaner's of building facilities hourly rates when hiring and after completing a 6-

month service remained at € 4.55 and € 4.84 respectively.

SOCIAL INSURANCE FUND

The most important development in relation to the Social Insurance Fund in 2015 was the increase in maternity allowance by four weeks for each child other than one of the same birth.

Furthermore, in relation to the efficient management of the Fund's reserves, OEB has begun a cycle of contacts for further processing of the whole issue and the formulation of specific policies in order to optimise the investment policy of the Fund.

REDUNDANCY FUND

The number of applications submitted for payment from the Redundancy Fund in 2015 stood at 5123. Applications in the last four years (2012 - 2015) are as follows:

2012: 9860
2013: 13592
2014: 6846
2015: 5123

Note that the number of applications submitted for payment in relation to the number of applications submitted in 2014 has decreased by 25%.

The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance considered in 2015 a total of 6289 applications, approving 5411 (total payment amount € 57,618,644). The number of applications pending by 31/12/15 was 5852 while the same figure in 31/12/14 was 11813.

SHOP OPENING HOURS

The extension of shop opening hours was the first substantial Government action since March 2013 which assisted in retaining the shrinking of the economy and reducing unemployment rate. New job positions were created, the sector turnover increased, government revenues were improved and an enormous potential of the sector has been freed. And all these, without having to spend a single euro of public money.

The extension of legal uncertainty with regard to the legal status for shops, is clearly a negative development for the retail industry and for all those working in the field. OEB is ready to negotiate with stakeholders a permanent solution under one condition: any adjustment should not result in the dismissal of one single person hired since the extension of working hours.

GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME

In order to rationalize and improve targeting of social protection and under the requirements of the Troika, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance promoted in 2014, reform of the social welfare system with the introduction of the Guaranteed Minimum Income, which replaced public assistance, providing a safety net for people who need it, while ensuring the prevention of exploitation of the welfare system.

Note that according to the data of the Ministry, by the end of 2015, approximately 20,100 households were approved to receive the allowance.

GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEM

In 2015 notable progress occurred only in the part relating to the competitive dialogue process for the System's computer system, while the government's priorities are focused on the autonomy of public hospitals, which is a prerequisite for its implementation.

Aiming to promote healthy competition and upgrade the level of public healthcare, OEB proposed the following positions:

- The autonomised hospitals to operate on the basis of private law and not public law.
- Application of the system as a multi-insurance one, provided that it will fall within the principles of System and without differentiated implementation costs.
- Responsibility of Health Fund management to be strictly in proportion to the financing parties (employers, employees, state).
- Enforce a maximum amount (cap) on the total income on which contributions will be made to prevent the escape of individuals of high income living in Cyprus.

OEB and the ad hoc Committee on Health and GHS established in early 2015, are following the issue very closely and are constantly in contact with all affected stakeholders.

It is noted that in January 2016 the Minister on Health announced the intention of the Government to proceed with an interim solution for implementing GHS, referring to it as 'Mini GHS ', which will cover the period between the autonomy of public hospitals and import of finished GHS.

REFORM OF PUBLIC SERVICE

OEB developed intense and diverse activity in 2015 in promoting the reform of the public service, particularly in relation to the rationalisation of the state payroll.

Specifically, in early 2015 an ad hoc Committee was established for the Reform of Public Service, which was intended to monitor the issue and which examined in detail a study issued by foreign experts.

OEB and the ad hoc Committee, closely monitor issues related to public sector reform and the state payroll in order to maintain the coherent, coordinated and quick response about any developments.

PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

The promotion of women's participation in the labour market and the Cyprus economy in general, is an issue of particular importance to OEB. Within multidimensional work, and with a view to promoting gender equality in all sectors and employment in particular, OEB is actively involved in the dialogue and bodies concerned with equality issues and undertakes initiatives and actions.

In particular, OEB:

- Contributes to the overall policy development on issues affecting women in the Council of the National mechanism for Women's Rights and various sub-committees.
- Promotes the correct application of legislation on equal treatment for men and women through the Committee for Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Training.
- Supports and contributes to the formation and promotion of the positions of the Cyprus Federation of Professional Women-Entrepreneurs.

During 2015, OEB continued the implementation of the project "Business Certification Model for Implementing Good Practice for Gender Equality in the Workplace", which was developed under the co-funded project "Actions for Reduction of Wage Gap Between Men and Women", implemented by the Industrial Relations Department of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Security.

LABOUR ADVISORY BODY

The main issues addressed by the Body in 2015 were:

- The Safety and Health at Work (Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Incidents) Regulations.
- The Law on Shop Opening Hours and the Conditions of Employment of Shop Assistants.
- The Management of Safety and Health Issues at Work Regulations.
- The Law on the Implementation of Facilitating Measures to Exercise the Rights of Employees in mobility freedom.

OTHER ACTIVITIES IN LABOUR RELATIONS AND SOCIAL POLICY

Within the framework of promoting the best interests of its members, OEB offered during the 2015 services to a significant number of companies and organisations.

Throughout the year the staff of OEB, either by phone or in personal meetings, provided a large number of information and guidance on the proper handling of labour disputes concerning the application of labour law, on matters relating to working conditions and environment, on safety and health at work, the current salary levels and similar benefits in Cyprus and abroad etc.

It is also noted that during 2015 OEB implemented the second part of the co-financed project "Sound Labour Relations, Contemporary Enterprises", which through its actions has as its main objective the improvement of quality of implementation of the Cyprus legislative and institutional framework for labour relations by SMEs through an integrated and targeted approach.

MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

With a view to supporting the development of Cypriot enterprises, OEB continued its vital role in training, covering a wide range of needs, according to demands of emerging topics.

The Department of Management Development has organised during 2015 training programmes on entrepreneurship, management, labour relations, energy saving, health and safety at the workplace, first aid and other topics.

The Department has also organised in-house training programmes for senior managers, designed in order to meet the specific training needs of each enterprise.

The Management Development Department is certified with the EN ISO9001:2008 for providing educational and training services and as a centre for providing professional training by the Human Resources Development Authority.

STUDIES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Sound Labour Relations – Contemporary Enterprises

During 2015, OEB continued the implementation of the project entitled “Sound Labour Relations – Contemporary Enterprises”, co-funded by the Republic of Cyprus and the European Social Fund of the European Union. The project aims to bridge the gap caused by the economic crisis and functional pressures on SMEs and the need for proper and effective implementation of labour legislation and legislative framework.

Also, in 2015, OEB carried out a Survey among 801 SMEs to examine their understanding of the legal and institutional framework governing industrial relations and developed the ‘Sound Industrial Relations 2014’ standard. The project also defined and recorded the Industrial Relations Officers’ required skills. Also, 108 officers were trained with the cooperation of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance and SEK trade union.

Another action of the project was the creation of a series of seven guide books simplifying labour legislation for business owners and HR practitioners. The guides covered a wide spectrum of topics including termination of employment, promoting equality and combating sexual harassment in the workplace, health and safety, basic labour law, social insurance and labour dispute resolution on the basis of the Industrial Relations Code.

The results of the program were presented at a special ceremony event.

Human Resources Advisory Services

Tailored solutions on issues dealing with the Administration and Development of Human Resources of OEB’s members were also provided. The studies varied from evaluating the effectiveness of existing management and human resources practices within organisations to the formulation of new practical and effective solutions. Additional HR services included restructuring services, job satisfaction surveys, 360° feedback and other HR related assignments.

EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

OEB Economic Conference

With huge attendance, OEB Economic Conference 2015, was organised, under the topic “*Cypriot Economy: The road to economic growth*”.

OEB’s Economic Conference dealt with issues such as fiscal policy and banking sector in Cyprus, while discussion also took place about policies that will help economic growth.

Main speakers were OEB’s President Mr. Christos Michaelides, Minister of Finance Mr. Charis Georgiades, President of Economic Committee at the House of Representatives Mr. Nicholas Papadopoulos and Governor of Central Bank of Cyprus Mrs Chrystalla Georgiadji.

Quality Conference 2015

During the European Quality Week, the Cyprus Association for Quality (member of OEB) organised for the fourth consecutive year the Quality Conference featuring the topic “Quality: Always, everywhere!” which took place on November 5th. The conference was organised within the framework of the continuous effort to upgrade services offered to members of the Association and the society in general.

The aim of the Conference was the broader promotion of recent management systems and best practices and presentation of the benefits that a business / organisation can draw in order to survive in times of economic crisis.

5th CITEA IT Conference & Fair

The Cyprus Information Technology Enterprises Association (member of OEB) organised on March 6th its fifth conference on the topic of “*Choose IT technology to upgrade your organisation*”.

7th Telecommunication, IT & Media Conference “InfoCom.Cyprus 2015”

With “Building the New Digital Economy” as its major theme, the conference dealt with the following topics: Restructuring the Infrastructure: Evolution or Revolution?, Cloudification + Internet of things: Next big step?, Leaders’ Summit: The next step?, Act & Disrupt: Startup – Innovate & Upscale!.

The conference was organised under the auspices of OEB, the Ministry of Communication & Works and the Telecommunication Enterprises’ Association (Member of OEB) and took place on December 1st.

11th Energy Saving Exhibition “SAVENERGY 2015” and 8th Environmental and Water Technologies Exhibition “Envirotec 2015”

Organised between 18-20 September, the two exhibitions showcased the range of energy saving, environmental and water treatment technologies and solutions available to businesses and consumers.

SAVENERGY 2015 was organised in association with the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism.

Presentations of 'Competitiveness for SMEs on Industry Sector and other targeted sectors' Subsidy Scheme

OEB took the initiative to present the new subsidy scheme with the title 'Competitiveness for SMEs on Industry Sector and other targeted sectors', in Nicosia on the 16th of April and Limassol on the 30th of April. During the presentations, speakers from the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism explained in detailed analysis the main provisions of the subsidy scheme to OEB members.