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Cyprus palace aims for zero emissions

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NICOSIA, June 19 (Reuters Life!) - Cyprus's seat of government will slash its CO2 emissions to zero within a year, setting an example for others to cut down on pollution belched into the atmosphere, officials said on Friday.

The presidential palace, an imposing limestone building in the centre of the capital Nicosia, is expected to become CO2 free within a year. The initiative, which began in 2008, will use concentrated solar energy to power the daily needs of the building and its occupants.

"It will set an example to the rest of Cypriot society for the development of a social and environmental conscience," said Titos Christofides, under-secretary to President Demetris Christofias.

The complex, which still bears a British coat of arms over its entrance, was once the home of the British colonial governor. Cyprus was a crown colony until 1960, and the present structure replaced a wooden one destroyed in a 1931 insurgency.

"The fact that the presidential palace is an older building, (and) the materials used actually help our endeavours," said Loukas Kalisperis, a professor at the Cyprus Institute, a local research organisation.

The palace is a complex of offices and although it has a residential quarter, it has not been lived in since 1993.

Cyprus was recently given a 10 million euro (\$13.92 million) fine by the EU Commission for exceeding the CO2 emission quota. (Reporting by Sarah Ktisti; editing by Paul Casciato)

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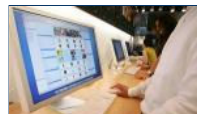
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