Panayiotis, 77, Hunting Rifle Repair Shop, Limassol

**1. Can you tell me a few things about yourself? For example, when and where you were born? Did you study for anything? Have you travelled or lived overseas?**

*My name is Panayiotis and I’m 77 years old. I’ve got three children and five grandchildren and we all live in Limassol. I’m a refugee from the war [the Turkish invasion of 1974]. I was born and brought up in Morphou, but when the war started we came to Limassol. They built houses for us back then and I live in my father’s house.*

**2. Have you ever owned another business in the past? How long have you been an owner of a business? How many businesses have you owned in the past?**

*No, this is the only business I have ever owned, I opened this business in 1976 once I got back on my feet again after the invasion. I’ve been here 42 years.*

**3. Can you tell me about the history behind your business?**

*When Turkey invaded in 1974, my father brought us all here to Limassol as refugees. For the first couple of years things were really difficult because it took quite a lot of time for the government to deal with the new conditions. I opened this shop here in 1976. I was repairing rifles before but I didn’t have a shop; they would bring them to my home. When I came here, the Turkish-Cypriots who had this house left to go and live in the occupied areas. So I took over the house by paying rent to the government. It’s a very low rent so it doesn’t bother me.*

**4. Are you facing any obstacles or problems in keeping your business going?**

*The problems are what I’ve told you about. In the past there were a lot of hunters because hunting was open to anyone. I’m not saying it’s right, but now all the European organisations and animal and bird protection organisations have prohibited many types of hunting. People pay €200 a year to get a hunting license and when they go to hunt they’re told they can only hunt for half of the game that they see [he was obviously annoyed and against the E.U. directive], so most of the people have stopped hunting and this affected me because there’s no wear and tear on the rifles because they’re not hunting anymore. Up until a few years ago I had a lot of work, especially from August until May-June there were days when I had to repair 7-8 rifles; that means €60-70 apiece. Now there’s nothing; all these organisations and new laws have ruined us.*

**5. What advantages did you see in continuing your business? Since business isn’t going so well, why don’t you retire?**

*I’ve been doing this job for many years now. I had three children and my grandchildren have been born and I’m still doing the same job. Things might not be the same as they were but I still really like my job. I’ve been doing the job for so long that I know everything inside out. OK, the income isn’t that good, there’s not that much work the way things are now. In the past hunting wasn’t just a hobby it was a way of life. Now with all these environmental and animal protection organisations work has really dropped. But I’m still working. What can I do? I can’t get by each month with the pension that I get. I might not get that much from here but even the €150-200 that I get, supplement my monthly income and we’re able to live a decent life. But even if I stop working here what am I supposed to do? Am I at an age where I can go and work for someone else as an employee, and would anyone employ me anyway? Or should I stay at home all day and not do anything?*

**6. Considering the experience that you have built up over the years but also the experience that you are going through now, would you say that you are still able to maintain the business and deal with the problems that affect it?**

*With all that we’ve said I think you’ve understood that I’m still working for the extra money that I earn, but mostly because I’m sure that I would get bored at home. It’s routine for me to get up every morning, get ready and come to my shop. Let’s say it’s a way of life.*