The Walls of Famagusta were famous throughout Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. They were constructed over many centuries as the city grew, changed rulers and adapted to warfare technology. The walls are principally constructed of a rubble masonry core with sandstone ashlers facing held together with a variety of mortars. They are an important record of military architecture and adaptation to changing technology and rulers. There are few such fortifications still in existence and therefore the importance of protecting and conserving them.

Within the framework of the EU funded and UNDP implemented “Support to cultural heritage monuments of great importance for Cyprus” project, a study “Survey, Investigations, Assessment and Project Design” was carried out between April and August 2014. This resulted in a Condition Assessment & Report for both the city and port side of the walls between the Othello Tower and the Arsenal.

The aim of the Study, was first to identify the critical problems, research and understand the monument and then create the designs for:

- stabilizing the monument
- protecting the elements that are at most risk while observing internationally recognised conservation standards

The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the UNDP in partnership with the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage.
The condition assessment report describes the Walls between Arsenal and Othello Tower as “in fair condition and structurally stable, but with some areas at risk”. The following issues were identified:

– Access control: the area between Seagate and Arsenal gate is currently used for informal parking
– Archaeological areas unprotected: a ruined church is located two meters away from the walls and is unprotected
– No site identification/didactic materials
– Site vegetation and rubbish
– Insufficient or no-drainage system
– Damage due to capillary action
– Masonry: exposed rubble core, missing stone ashlars, linear fissures, inappropriate interventions, loss/stiff mortar, stained masonry, eroded stone areas
– Blocked firing galleries
– Water percolation
– No access for persons with disabilities
– No toilet facilities
– No visitor control/information

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More information on on-going projects of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage can be found here: http://www.cy.undp.org/content/cyprus/en/home/operations/projects/partnershipforthefuture/support-to-cultural-heritage-monuments-of-great-importance-for-c.html

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More resources: www.cy.undp.org

The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage - The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage works in line with the mutually agreed mechanism for the preservation of the island’s common heritage. In 2009 the Advisory Board was set up by a decision of the two leaders as the executive body of the Committee. The aim of the Board is to protect, preserve and facilitate the preservation, physical protection and restoration (including research, study and survey) of the immovable cultural heritage of Cyprus. This mechanism allows for the practical aspects of preservation to be considered in a non-political manner so that practical measures can be taken to improve the situation on the ground.

United Nations Development Programme – Partnership for the Future (UNDP-PFF) - The Agreement on the establishment of the Advisory Board for the Preservation, Physical Protection and Restoration of the Immovable Cultural Heritage of Cyprus recognizes a special role to UNDP in Cyprus as a politically accepted implementation body by both communities. For this reason, UNDP-PFF was requested by the European Commission to become the lead coordinator under which the project would be implemented fostering dialogue, cooperation and confidence building between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

European Union - Since 2012 approximately €6.7 million of European Union funds have been provided by the European Commission to implement the priorities of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage for the preservation of the island-wide cultural heritage in Cyprus. The European Union is the biggest supporter of the work of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in Cyprus.