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FMA Visit to Cyprus



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The Cypriot Presidency

6 GOALS



**"An
Autonomous
Union. Open
to the World"**

Cyprus' Vision for the EU Council Presidency 2026

Assuming the Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2026, Cyprus presents a forward-looking programme under the motto "An Autonomous Union. Open to the World." The country takes over from Denmark and will hand the baton on to Ireland. Cyprus is the final member of the presidency trio with Poland and Denmark.

The Cypriot Presidency outlines a progressive and future-orientated agenda that places emphasis on the EU's ability to take decisive action, maintain unity, and safeguard its values both internally and on the global stage.

The Cypriot Presidency's priorities are founded on those of the previous Trio Presidencies, however, it places additional emphasis on issues of relevance to Cyprus' regional context, such as national autonomy and migration. The programme reinforces the importance of Europe's capacity to act independently in the fields of geopolitics and defence, including through strengthened EU-NATO cooperation, as well as enhanced maritime, water and internal security. In this context, the Cyprus Presidency highlights the need to continue diplomatic, political, economic, military, energy and humanitarian support for Ukraine. Cyprus reaffirms its commitment to a just and lasting peace that fully respects the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Presidency promotes a globally engaged Europe - by improving cooperation with third countries, enhancing effective crisis response, strengthening the single market, and leading climate diplomacy, all while countering attacks on democracy.

Source:

<https://cyprus-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/programme/priorities/>

Cyprus' Priorities

A Competitive Europe

The Presidency reinforces a strong emphasis on long-term competitiveness. Central to this is the conclusion of interinstitutional negotiations and a firm push for legislative simplification across EU institutions. The Presidency supports clearer laws and improved impact assessments, especially in industrial and digital sectors. Cyprus' Presidency will prioritise boosting EU competitiveness by driving an ambitious legislative simplification agenda, including digital, environmental, and food safety omnibuses.

In economic and financial affairs, the Presidency also supports strengthening the single market, fostering digital competitiveness, and increasing investments in innovation and critical technologies such as AI and biotech. In addition, the Presidency seeks to unlock stalled files and deepen market integration. This will lay the groundwork for a more resilient and innovative European economy.

A Secure Europe

In response to Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine, the Cypriot Presidency will focus on strengthening Europe's defence capabilities and the industrial base. A priority will be given to advancing the proposal on military mobility and the Defence Omnibus. In addition, an agreement will be reached regarding the future financing for Ukraine, including through the Reparation Loan.

A secure Europe also requires effective migration management. The Presidency seeks to launch trilogues on the Returns Directive in early 2026 and to conclude interinstitutional talks on preventing unauthorised entry. A focus will be given to implementing the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and strengthening external border controls.

Social Initiatives

One of the key ambitions of the Cyprus Presidency is to close long-running negotiations on the 2016 proposal on the coordination of social security systems. It aims to bring discussions that have stalled to a concrete conclusion. The Presidency also plans to commence trilogue negotiations on the new rules governing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund once the European Parliament secures its mandate early in 2026. Efforts will be made to advance work on the Traineeship Directive, with a view to strengthening protections and improving the quality of traineeships across the Union.

Justice and Home Affairs

Firstly, the Presidency intends to secure a Council position and subsequently open negotiations with the European Parliament on the protection of adults. At the same time, it plans to bring Council-level negotiations to a close on the regulation on parenthood, building on the opinion delivered by Parliament during the previous legislative term and seeking to ensure legal clarity and continuity.

Cyprus places a strong emphasis on strengthening the Union's response to cross-border organised crime and has committed to launching substantive work in the Council in the second quarter of 2026 on proposals to reinforce the mandates and capacities of Europol and Eurojust. The Presidency will also work towards establishing Council positions on the Defence of Democracy Package. This is an area where the European Parliament has already highlighted its readiness to enter into negotiations.

Cyprus will continue work on the EU digital travel application through ongoing trilogues. This reflects the Presidency's intention to maintain momentum on digitalisation initiatives. Cyprus aims to pursue negotiations with Parliament on the directive addressing child sexual abuse as a criminal offence. Similarly, the Presidency aims to conclude talks on the regulation designed to prevent and combat this crime online. An agreement is expected on the latter before April, in order to avoid the need to further extend the current derogation from the e-Privacy Directive.

Agriculture

In the field of agriculture, the main ongoing trilogue concerns the new rules for the common market organisation, which the Cyprus Presidency intends to continue taking forward. Negotiations are also set to commence on plant reproductive materials once the European Parliament is ready in early 2026. In addition, there will be further negotiations on fishing in the Mediterranean, where both institutions have already adopted their positions. The Presidency also aims to move work forward on improving the protection of animals during transport. This initiative would involve implementing the recommendations of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and updating fisheries statistics.

A Global European Union

The Cypriot Presidency aims to strengthen the European Union's role as a strong, values-based global actor that has the ability to shape international norms and pragmatically respond to challenges that occur on national and international levels.

In the area of the EU's external relations, the Cyprus Presidency will take receipt of the European Parliament's decisions on giving consent to the partnership with the Mercosur countries, as well as on the related interim trade agreements. Later in the winter, the Presidency is expecting to receive Parliament's positions on proposals concerning the non-application of EU customs duties to certain United States products. This would include industrial goods, and selected seafood and agricultural products.

Alongside this, the Presidency aims to bring trilogue negotiations on steel overcapacity to a conclusion, reflecting ongoing efforts to address global market distortions. It will also seek to make progress towards an agreement with Parliament on the planned overhaul of the EU customs system. The objective is to modernise procedures and strengthen the Union's trade framework

Programme of the Cyprus Presidency.

The Programme of the Cyprus Presidency sets out the priorities and strategic agenda Cyprus will pursue during its six-month leadership of the Council of the European Union. Against a backdrop of heightened geopolitical uncertainty, the Presidency emphasises strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy, enhancing internal cohesion, and promoting decisive external engagement. It outlines Cyprus' commitment to broker unity among Member States and translate ambitions into tangible outcomes across Council formations.

To continue reading...

Source:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/779221/EPRS_BRI\(2026\)779221_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/779221/EPRS_BRI(2026)779221_EN.pdf)

The Cypriot Parliament and EU affairs (EPRS, Jan 2026)

This briefing by the European Parliamentary Research Service provides an analytical overview of the role and functioning of the Parliament of Cyprus (House of Representatives), with particular attention to its engagement with European Union. The paper details how Cyprus's Parliament organises its internal committees, notably the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, and how EU constitutional amendments following accession have integrated EU law into national practice. In addition, it discusses the formal and informal mechanisms by which the Parliament scrutinises EU legislative proposals and monitors executive activity in EU decision-making. The briefing situates these practices within the broader context of Cyprus's participation in EU governance and interparliamentary exchange.

To continue reading...

Source:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/779221/EPRS_BRI\(2026\)779221_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/779221/EPRS_BRI(2026)779221_EN.pdf)

The Trio Programme

Trio Programme

From 1 July to 31 December 2025, Denmark will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Denmark together with the Polish Presidency in the first half of 2025 and the Cypriot Presidency in the first half of 2026 form a so-called trio. The trio has formulated a joint programme for the eighteen months covered by these presidencies.

Priorities of the Trio Programme

The Member States of the Council are divided into so-called trios. The countries that make up each trio work closely together and develop a joint programme covering an 18-month period. The programme helps ensure continuity in the work of the Council.

The current trio programme was published in December 2024 and covers the period from 1 January 2025 until 30 June 2026. It is comprised of three main priorities:

A strong and secure Europe

The trio places focus on a coherent and influential external action, strategic action on security and defence, a comprehensive approach to migration and border management, as well as a well-prepared enlargement and internal reforms.

A prosperous and competitive Europe

The trio places focus on an integrated approach to competitiveness, succeeding in the green and digital transitions, promoting an innovation and business-friendly environment, as well as advancing together.

A free and democratic Europe

The trio places focus on the upholding of European values within the EU.

To continue reading...

Source:

<https://cyprus-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/programme/trio-programme/>

Priority dossiers under the Cypriot EU Council Presidency (EPRS 2026)

INTRODUCTION

Cyprus assumed the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 January 2026 and will be in office until 30 June 2026. The country takes over from Denmark and will hand the baton on to Ireland. Cyprus is the last member of the presidency trio with Poland and Denmark.

STATE AND GOVERNMENT

The Republic of Cyprus is a presidential democracy. The president is the head of state and the head of government; there is no prime minister. This full presidential system is unique among the EU Member States.

According to the Constitution, executive power is exercised jointly by a Greek Cypriot President and a Turkish Cypriot Vice-President of the Republic, through a Council of Ministers appointed by them (seven and three ministers, respectively).

In 1963, the Turkish Cypriot Vice-President and the three Turkish Cypriot ministers withdrew from government, and since then the government has been functioning by necessity only with Greek Cypriots in all ministries, the number of which was subsequently raised to 11. Moreover, the President of the Republic, according to the provisions of the relevant national legislation, has appointed five Deputy Ministers. The post of Vice-President remains vacant.

The post of Deputy Minister for European Affairs has been created especially for the Presidency. It will cease after Cyprus's term concludes.

The President convenes and sets the agenda of the Council of Ministers. In foreign affairs, defence and security, the President has veto powers over both the legislative branch and the Council of Ministers.

The current President of the Republic is Nikos Christodoulides, in office since 1 March 2023, following presidential elections in February 2023. His term of office, as is also that of the Council of Ministers, is five years, with the next presidential elections scheduled for February 2028. President Christodoulides is independent, supported by the nationalist-centrist Democratic Party (DIKO - S&D), the social-democratic Movement for Social Democracy - Citizens' Alliance (EDEK - S&D), and the centrist Democratic Alignment (DIPA - Renew).

PARLIAMENT

The House of Representatives (Vouli Antiprosopon) is the unicameral national legislative body of Cyprus. Its 56 members are elected for five-year terms under a system close to simple proportional representation. There are three reserved seats for religious groups (Armenians, Latins and Maronites) over and above the 56, without the right to vote. Another 24 seats are allocated to Turkish Cypriots, but these have been vacant since 1964. At present, the following parties which have topped the 3.6 % electoral threshold sit in the House of Representatives:

- Democratic Rally (Dimokratikós Sinagermós, DISY): 17
- Progressive Party of Working People (Anorthotikó Kómma Ergazómenou Laoú, AKEL): 15
- Democratic Party (*Dimokratikó Kómma*, DIKO): 9
- National Popular Front (*Ethnikó Laikó Métopo*, ELAM) : 3
- EDEK Socialist Party (*EDEK Sosialistikó Kómma*): 2
- Democratic Alignment (*Dimokratikí Parátaxi*, DIPA): 4
- Environmental Movement - Citizens' Cooperation (*Kínima ekológon – Synergasía politón*): 2
- Independent: 2 · Individual socialist MP: 1
- MP for Larnaca constituency: 1

The House of Representatives in its current composition will dissolve at the end of March 2026 before the next parliamentary elections on 30 May 2026, during Cyprus's term holding the Council Presidency.

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024

Cyprus elected six of the 720 Members of the European Parliament on 9 June 2024, with a 58.8 % turnout and the following results:

- Democratic Rally: 24.78 %, 2 EPP
- Progressive Party of Working People: 21.49 %, 1 The Left
- Fidias Panayiotou (*Fidias*): 19.36 %, 1 non-attached
- National Popular Front: 11.19 %, 1 ECR
- Democratic Party: 9.72 %, 1 S&D · EDEK Socialist Party: 5.07 %, no seats
- Other: 8.39 %, no seats

Compared to the previous legislature when the EPP, S&D, and The Left each had two Cypriot MEPs, only the EPP kept its two Cypriot seats, with S&D and The Left falling to one Cypriot Member each. The ECR added one, and there is also a non-attached Cypriot MEP.

STATE OF PLAY

For Cypriots, immigration is by far the most important issue facing the EU (42 % thought so, as opposed to 18 % in the EU as a whole), according to the results of a Eurobarometer survey in spring 2025. Concerns about the state of the economy come second (25 %), while Ukraine's invasion by Russia comes in at third place (24 %). Cypriots think that to reinforce its role in the world, the EU should focus primarily on defence and security, shows the autumn issue of the survey.

The Schengen Agreement is not yet in effect on the island.

THE CYPRUS QUESTION

After it invaded and occupied 37 % of the territory of the island in 1974, Turkey instigated and endorsed a 'unilateral declaration of independence' in the occupied area in 1983. The UN Security Council considered the declaration to be legally invalid. The so-called 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' is only recognised by Turkey, which exercises effective control over it. The international community, including the EU, recognises the Government of Cyprus as the single legitimate government on the island.

The last round of settlement talks collapsed in 2017. In 2025, a personal envoy of the UN Secretary General was tasked to work towards the resumption of negotiations. The European Commission appointed former Commissioner Johannes Hahn as the EU's special envoy for Cyprus.

In October, the Turkish Cypriot community elected a new leader, with the Turkish nationalist incumbent being replaced by an opposition leader.

The entire island is part of the EU, so all Cypriots are EU citizens, but the EU legal framework is suspended in the areas not controlled by the government. A specific regulation allows for the movement of people and goods across the 'Green Line'.

POLITICAL PRIORITIES OF THE CYPRUS PRESIDENCY

Autonomy is the key concept in the Cypriot programme, which extends the concept to areas of security and defence, competitiveness, openness in external policy, values and social affairs, and the long-term budget.

The Cyprus Presidency's priorities share common cause with previous presidencies of the trio, with additional emphasis on issues in Cyprus's own regional focus.

The programme emphasises the need for Europe to act independently in geopolitics and defence, including by advancing EU-NATO cooperation, as well as improving maritime, water, and internal security.

Under the geopolitics heading, the Cyprus Presidency stresses continuing diplomatic, political, economic, military, energy and humanitarian support for Ukraine, and its commitment to a just and lasting peace respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

With the highest per capita number of both 2024 asylum applications and second-quarter-2025 returns, Cyprus concentrates on effective migration management by improving cooperation with third countries and setting up return hubs.

Cyprus wants to advance enlargement, pay special attention to relations with the EU's Southern Neighbourhood and the Gulf, aim to cooperate with the US, promote rules-based trade – including through free trade agreements with India and the United Arab Emirates – and enhance effective crisis response.

Simplification, in particular in the interests of small and medium-sized enterprises; improvements to the single market; the construction of the capital markets union, including through setting up a savings and investment union; energy and digital sovereignty; cross-regional connectivity; sustainable production; and stable food systems are some of the priorities in the area of the economy.

The Presidency will work on countering attacks on democracy, including disinformation, foreign interference, and attacks against media freedom. It wants to reflect EU values in the areas of rule of law and social issues. Affordable housing, reducing poverty, a safe online environment for children, fair work conditions, availability of medicinal products, and the fight against discrimination are some of their priorities in this area.

Cyprus will continue work on the EU's long-term budgetary framework for 2028 to 2034.

Finally, the Presidency is committed to moving forward with unfinished business, including a host of legislative proposals on which Council positions are still forming or where trilogue negotiations have already started.

The priorities align with the 2026 Commission work programme.

LEGISLATIVE WORK

Below is an overview of the legislation that the Cyprus Presidency expects to handle.

COMPETITIVENESS

Cyprus will take over work on the legislative simplification packages. With some agreements already struck under previous presidencies, negotiations between the institutions can start on further omnibus proposals, with Parliament set to establish its positions on the three files of the Defence Omnibus (Omnibus 5) early in the year and on the four files of Omnibus 4 on small mid-caps in spring. Parliament also has to formulate its position on the remaining omnibus file on chemicals (Omnibus 6). The Presidency aims to conclude interinstitutional talks on all of these.

On top of the simplification packages already under way, the Cyprus Presidency has several new ones in its in-tray: Digital Omnibus on AI, Environmental Omnibus, Automotive Omnibus, and the Food and Feed Safety Omnibus, as well as two omnibuses to simplify energy product legislation and taxation (expected in the second quarter of 2026). It intends to advance Council negotiations on all of these.

In the field of economy and finance, Cyprus wants to continue negotiations with Parliament on financial data access (FiDA), which did not progress during the previous presidency.

The Presidency wants to start Council work on several proposals on financial services: the market integration package, the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation, the occupational retirement provision, the European personal pension product, and the amendment of the Critical Raw Materials Act, this latter being part of the ResourceEU Action Plan. It will also work on the 28th company law regime in taxation (expected to be presented in March 2026), on which Parliament is to adopt a legislative initiative early in 2026. The Cypriots are also focused on negotiations with

Parliament on the securitisation framework, and on the digital euro, once the co-legislators are ready, towards the end of their Presidency. In addition, Cyprus aims to conclude negotiations on commercial real estate statistics.

In the area of the internal market, the Council is waiting for Parliament to formulate its position on the carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances (CMRD) directive. Together with critical medicinal products, on which the Council has a position and Parliament is ready in January, these topics are among the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency, wanting to conclude negotiations on both. Cyprus aims to move towards a position in the Council on drug precursors, the targeted simplification of EU rules for medical devices and in vitro diagnostics, the EU Space Act, the intellectual property-related supplementary protection certificates package, and the two files on tobacco tax – on the latter, Parliament is set to deliver its opinions only after the Cyprus Presidency. The Presidency also intends to make progress inside the Council on the regulation on medical devices, and the Biotech Act, and the extension of the carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) to more products.

Cyprus pledges to start work on the drugs package, the Industrial Accelerator Act (expected on 28 January) and to discuss upcoming proposals, including the European Innovation Act, the Public Procurement Act, the initiative on short term rentals, the revision of the REACH Regulation, and the Critical Raw Materials Centre, all expected in the first half of 2026.

As regards transport, the Presidency will have to deal with the deadline-bound next steps in the second-reading procedure of air passenger rights, on which Parliament is expected to deliver its response to the Member States' position in January 2026. In addition, it is the ambition of Cyprus to complete trilogue negotiations on the remaining two files in the Passenger Rights Package, launch interinstitutional talks once Parliament has its position on the directives on roadworthiness tests and vehicle registrations, and continue such talks on the maximum weights and dimensions of vehicles.

Cyprus wants to forge a Council position on CO2 emissions of heavy-duty vehicles and on discontinuing seasonal changes of time, both files that have not moved for years.

The Presidency will work in parallel with Parliament on its positions on files in the Roadworthiness package. Trilogues can immediately start on accounting of greenhouse gas emissions of transport services, and the Presidency aims for an agreement with Parliament on the single European railway area. Importantly for the transport sector, the directive on energy taxation is one of the Danish priorities, on which, however, Parliament is only consulted.

New proposals for Cyprus include the automotive package with the revision of CO2 standards for light vehicles and the greening of corporate fleets. The Cypriot planning envisages progress on these two files.

The energy legislation the Presidency has on its table includes the two new proposals of the European Grids Package, on which Cyprus pushes for a general approach by the end of its Presidency, and strengthening energy security (the proposal is expected in the first quarter of 2026). It wants to negotiate with Parliament on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF; MFF), on which the Danish Presidency obtained a partial mandate already. On the other hand, the Cypriots have not given indications on the taxation of energy products.

Finally, in the digital area, a new proposal on the desk of the Presidency is European Business Wallets on which it wants to make progress. In addition, the Commission is expected to present the Cybersecurity Act (on 14 January) and the Digital Networks Act (on 20 January), as well as the Cloud and AI Development Act, the Chips Act, and the Quantum Act (later in the first half of 2026): the Cypriots pledge to start work on all of these files.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE

In the field of migration, the Presidency wants to start trilogues on the Returns Directive when Parliament is ready in early 2026. It strives to obtain a general approach and conclude interinstitutional talks on preventing unauthorised entries, on which Parliament is ready to negotiate.

In defence, Cyprus focuses on the proposal on military mobility, in addition to the Defence Omnibus (see above).

Importantly, it wants to agree swiftly on future financing of Ukraine through the Reparation Loan.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

The Presidency wants to obtain a Council position then open negotiations with Parliament on the protection of adults. It also intends to conclude Council negotiations on the regulation on parenthood on which the Parliament delivered its opinion in the previous legislature. To improve the fight against cross-border organised crime, the Cypriots pledge to launch work in the Council on the proposals on strengthening Europol and Eurojust in the second quarter of 2026. Cyprus will aim for Council positions on the Defence of Democracy Package, on which Parliament stands ready to negotiate. The Presidency will continue trilogues on the EU digital travel application. Cyprus similarly wants to continue negotiations with Parliament on the directive on child sexual abuse (criminal offences), and conclude them on the regulation to prevent and combat this crime online. The Presidency expects to reach such an agreement before April to avoid having to prolong the derogation from the e-Privacy Directive.

SOCIAL

Closing long-running negotiations on the 2016 proposal on the coordination of social security systems is one of the ambitions of the Cyprus Presidency. It will start trilogues on the new rules on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund once Parliament obtains its mandate early in the year, and attempt to make progress on the Traineeship Directive.

AGRICULTURE

New common market organisation rules are the subject of the main ongoing agriculture-area trilogue the Cyprus Presidency wishes to continue. Trilogues are expected to start on plant reproductive materials, as soon as Parliament is ready in early 2026, and on fishing in the Mediterranean, on which both institutions have their positions already. The Presidency intends to make progress on the protection of animals during transport, the transposition of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations recommendations, and fisheries statistics.

The Cypriot programme does not mention work on the transposition of the UN High Seas Treaty on which Parliament is ready with its position.

GLOBAL EU

The Cyprus Presidency will receive Parliament's decisions on consent to partnership with Mercosur countries and the interim trade agreements. Similarly, in late winter it will receive the positions of Parliament on the non-application of EU customs duties on certain US products (industrial goods, certain seafood, agricultural goods, and processed lobster), before starting trilogues if the Council is ready. The Presidency will work to conclude trilogues on steel overcapacity, and attempt to reach an agreement with Parliament on the overhaul of the EU customs system.

URGENT INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

The Cyprus Presidency takes over work on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Cyprus has pledged to proceed on the MFF sectoral programmes, aiming for partial general approaches on, among others, national plans, the competition fund, and the external action instrument. At the June European Council meeting, the Presidency also wants to complete a 'mature negotiating framework' with indicative figures, constituting an amendment of the original Commission proposal. In addition, Cyprus will work on the new own resources package and the Performance Framework Regulation.

The Presidency is ready to steer work on the internal reform of the EU if Commission presents its in-depth policy reviews, and expects to conclude the Parliament-introduced amendment of the EU Electoral Act to allow for proxy voting during and after maternity leave

Cypriot Presidency debriefs EP committees on priorities

Ministers are holding a series of meetings in parliamentary committees to present the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council.

Cyprus holds the presidency of the Council until the end of June 2026. This text will be updated regularly as the hearings take place.

Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee

On 26 January, Minister of Justice and Public Order Costas Fitiris highlighted gender equality as a core focus of the presidency, with particular emphasis on combating gender-based violence, including online violence. He also referenced strengthening prevention, support to victims and promoting gender mainstreaming across EU policies, plus the upcoming 2026–2030 EU gender equality strategy, as key priorities.

MEPs pushed for a stronger intersectional approach, calling for continued attention to sexual and reproductive health and rights, LGBTQI equality, and gender budgeting. They warned of an ongoing and widespread backlash against women's rights, highlighted emerging risks linked to digital platforms and artificial intelligence (AI), and called for progress on the long-stalled anti-discrimination directive.

Culture and Education Committee

On 27 January, Deputy Minister for Culture Vasiliki Kassianidou highlighted the “cultural compass for Europe” as key step towards placing culture at the heart of EU policymaking, and the AgoraEU 2028–2034 programme as an initiative to strengthen culture and media as democratic public goods. The Cyprus Presidency also plans to advance discussions on the EU work programme for culture, enhance media literacy, and address the protection and return of cultural goods.

Source:

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20260126IPR32642/cyprus-presidency-debriefs-european-parliament-committees-on-priorities>

Many MEPs stressed the need for adequate funding for culture and media in the EU's next long-term budget. Some highlighted the role of culture and media in countering disinformation, while others called for stronger support for independent cultural creators, better working conditions in the artistic sector, and improved media literacy.

Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee

On 27 January, Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry Michael Damianos said the presidency will prioritise the 2030 consumer agenda, the protection of minors online, and action to tackle deceptive consumer practices. Other priorities outlined by Nicodemos Damianou, Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy included progressing quickly on all digital omnibus files and concluding negotiations on the customs reform and posting of workers rules.

MEPs questioned the presidency on its plans to strengthen EU digital sovereignty and leadership, notably on digital infrastructure and cybersecurity, amid growing foreign algorithmic interference. They called for stronger enforcement of the Digital Services Act and the Artificial Intelligence Act and asked about a potential social media ban for minors. MEPs sought further clarity on the presidency's support for a European preference in public procurement and on the stalled late payments file.

Transport and Tourism Committee

On 27 January, Alexis Vafeades, Minister of Transport, stressed that the presidency will focus on air passenger rights, greener, safer, more efficient and competitive transport, and advancing dual use infrastructure. Marina Hadjimanolis, Deputy Minister of Shipping, highlighted the upcoming EU industrial maritime strategy and a declaration on seafarers. Kostas Koumis, Deputy Minister of Tourism, said that his country will drive the evaluation of a 2030 EU tourism agenda to implement and debate the EU strategy on sustainable tourism.

MEPs emphasised that Parliament stands united behind air passengers and will not allow the watering down of their existing rights. Some MEPs committed to deliver on Parliament's position on roadworthiness, and asked the presidency to advance the work on the automotive package. Securing adequate financial support for EU cross-border infrastructure, resilience and alternative fuels were amongst other points mentioned by MEPs.

Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee

On 27 January, Minister of Justice and Public Order Constantinos Fitis highlighted the fight against serious and organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, child sexual abuse and digital threats, as well as the need to reinforce cooperation through Europol and strengthen external borders. Deputy Minister of Migration and International Protection Nicholas A. Ioannides identified migration as a priority, with a focus on implementing the Migration and Asylum Pact and strengthening returns through deeper partnerships with non-EU countries.

Many MEPs called for stronger interoperability to support law enforcement and asylum systems. Several MEPs stressed the need to protect those fighting organised crime, strengthen action on deradicalisation and safeguard data protection. Others raised questions on border control, returns and solidarity, and the need to address hate crime.

Deputy Minister for European Affairs Marilena Raouna stressed that the rule of law is a cornerstone of the European project and essential for the functioning of the single market. She highlighted the presidency's focus on advancing the Article 7 procedure and taking forward simplification and better regulation.

Many MEPs raised questions on how to respond to new threats such as organised crime, foreign interference and disinformation. Some MEPs stressed the need to ensure judicial independence and a consistent application of rule of law principles, while others highlighted the importance of adequate funding in the next EU long-term budget.

Fisheries Committee

On 27 January, Maria Panayiotou, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, said the presidency will work on strengthening the common fisheries policy (CFP). They will also try to ensure that the needs of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors are reflected in the EU's new long-term budget. The presidency also expects to finalise negotiations on the implementation into EU law of the rules on regional fisheries management organisations and to make progress on the sustainable fisheries partnerships with Mauritania and Morocco.

MEPs unanimously considered "unacceptable" the reduction envisaged in the next long-term budget for fisheries. They called for the simplification of fisheries laws, modernisation of the EU's fishing fleet, and for a pragmatic approach to decarbonisation. MEPs also asked questions about guaranteeing equal opportunities between EU and third-country fisheries and on the use of flags of convenience.

International Trade Committee

On 27 January, Michael Damianos, Minister for Energy, Commerce and Industry said that a rules-based, open but frank relationship with other countries should be at the heart of EU trade relations. At the same time, the EU must defend its values and its legislative independence.

MEPs questioned the minister on the Presidency's strategy on transatlantic relations, Mercosur, a proposal to counteract steel overcapacity, and the ratification of free trade agreements (notably India and the Philippines). Other questions focused on the reform and strengthening of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), preserving the resilience of the EU's supply chains, and intensifying the EU response to Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Legal Affairs Committee

On 28 January, Minister of Justice and Public Order Constantinos Fytiris stressed the need to make advances on legislation relating to the protection of adults, with negotiations expected to start in March. He also committed to bridging differences between EU countries on parenthood rules. Other priorities are the 28th regime - a new set of company rules applicable across the EU, EU rules on patents, and a copyright framework adapted to new technologies.

MEPs inquired about possible investment in the judicial system in the EU's next long-term budget, European cross-border associations - on which member states raised serious concerns, the temporary application of the Mercosur deal, and Russia's accountability for its war on Ukraine.

Foreign Affairs Committee

On 28 January, Minister for Foreign Affairs Constantinos Kombos focused on European autonomy and enhanced partnerships around the world as the best way to protect the EU's security. Supporting Ukraine remains a priority, including throughout sanctions, he said, adding that transatlantic relations should be preserved via constructive dialogue and by working with confidence on contentious issues. Deputy Minister for European Affairs Marilena Raouna stressed the importance of EU enlargement as a strategic investment in the EU's future.

MEPs asked about advancing the enlargement process and the associated need to reform the EU. They inquired about Türkiye's role in the EU's security and defence, and if the Greenland crisis could be resolved during the Cypriot Presidency. MEPs also focused on the EU's engagement in Gaza, measures against the regime in Iran, and the Middle East more generally.

Security and Defence Committee

On 28 January, Defence Minister Vasilis Palmas said the Presidency will focus on continuing to support Ukraine, strengthening Europe's defence industry, speeding up defence readiness and innovation, investing in maritime security and supporting humanitarian operations, including the evacuation of non-combatant personnel. He also highlighted issues linked to economic security, including addressing threats to critical infrastructure and defence supply-chain vulnerabilities.

MEPs asked about a range of topics, including maritime security, European flagship defence projects, and how to address the use of drones in modern warfare. The possible operationalisation of the EU's mutual defence clause, EU support loan for Ukraine, the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, and EU countries' increasing defence spending, were also raised.

Constitutional Affairs Committee

On 28 January, Deputy Minister for European Affairs Marilena Raouna said that internal EU reforms linked to enlargement, the next long-term budget and competitiveness are key priorities. She also highlighted the pending reform of the European Electoral Act, including the targeted amendment on proxy voting, discussions on Parliament's right of inquiry, and the Transparency Directive.

Many MEPs called for progress on treaty reform, particularly to address the continued reliance on unanimity in foreign policy decision-making against a backdrop of geopolitical challenges and EU enlargement. Some pressed for a quick agreement on Parliament's recent initiative on proxy voting and broader electoral reform, while others urged progress on the right of inquiry and the interinstitutional ethics body.

Industry, Research and Energy Committee

On 28 January, Vasilis Palmas, Minister of Defence, emphasised as priorities simplifying defence procurement, strengthening the defence industrial base, and supporting innovative SMEs. He also highlighted the importance of EU-NATO cooperation and territorial sovereignty, particularly in the context of Cyprus's illegal occupation.

Michael Damianos, Minister for Energy, Commerce and Industry referenced securing energy supply through interconnections, decarbonisation without deindustrialisation, reducing critical dependencies, and simplifying rules to accelerate industrial and energy projects. The Presidency will also focus, he said, on the new legislative proposal on electricity grids.

Nicodemos Damianou, Minister for Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, said that the Presidency will work on the Digital Networks Act (DNA) for the modernisation of telecom infrastructure (5G/6G), online child protection through age verification, and boosting research to drive innovation and retain talents. The Presidency will also try to finalise the work on the EU Space Act.

MEPs questioned the ministers on balancing accelerated energy permitting with environmental protection, the impact of the green transition on households and SMEs, and the ban on Russian oil imports while ensuring energy security. They discussed regulatory simplification for SMEs, reducing reliance on non-European suppliers, and integrating SMEs into strategic supply chains. MEPs also mentioned cybersecurity, EU ownership of cloud and artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure, talent retention, and effective online child protection through age verification.

Development Committee

On 28 January Constantinos Kombos, Minister for Foreign Affairs identified water security, resilient health systems, youth opportunities, and women's empowerment as priorities. The Presidency also aims to deliver a partial general approach among EU governments on the future Global Europe instrument by June 2026. Additionally, he referenced the Global Gateway initiative, humanitarian aid as focus issues, alongside highlighting Eastern Africa, the Middle East - including the reconstruction of Gaza - and Ukraine as geographical areas of particular relevance.

MEPs questioned Minister Kombos on the importance decent job creation for young people, the relationship with the USA at a time when they are reducing aid support, the situation in Syria, asylum and migration, and progress on member state negotiations on Global Europe.

Agriculture and Rural Development Committee

On 28 January, Maria Panayiotou, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, identified the following as priorities: innovation, sustainable farming, and simplification, as well as a set of robust crisis-proof measures. She added that the Presidency is committed to a constructive discussion on the next long-term budget as well as the new Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). Adequate funding for the CAP and a stable, resilient, and affordable food supply chain are also priorities, she said.

MEPs expressed concerns about the new CAP and asked for more

clarity on the proposal. Several MEPs want to make sure that imports from outside the EU meet the same strict criteria EU farmers have to respect. Other MEPs called for measures to make farming more attractive for young people and for broad solutions to deal with the different crises affecting the sector.

Employment and Social Affairs Committee

On 29 January, Minister for Labour and Social Insurance Marinos Moushountas said fair and inclusive employment and fair mobility were Presidency priorities. Clea Hadjistephanou-Papaellina, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, stressed their commitment to fighting poverty, focusing on child poverty, reinforcing long-term care and active aging, and the rights of persons with disabilities. Access to sustainable and affordable housing should be a fundamental right for all, Interior Minister Constantinos Ioannou, while stressing the need to boost investment and supply and sharing information across EU countries.

MEPs quizzed the ministers about the coordination of social security systems, the traineeships directive, and the revision of the carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances directive. They welcomed the Presidency's commitment to fighting child poverty and stressed the need for a dedicated budget for the child guarantee in the next long-term budget. Housing, occupational health and safety, Europe's care agenda and fair mobility were also discussed.

Environment, Climate and Food Safety Committee

On 29 January, the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Maria Panayiotou, highlighted the importance of water resilience as a security, economic stability, and public health concern. She stressed the need to continue legislative simplification without lowering the EU's environmental ambition, and to boost the transition to a circular economy to reduce dependency on raw materials. Other priorities referenced included the revision of the CO2 standards for cars and vans.

Many MEPs called for a more effective water management approach to address water scarcity across the EU. On simplification, a number of political groups agreed that the EU must maintain its level of protection, pointing to realistic

environmental legislation as a way forward. Others raised concerns about the proposed cuts to EU agriculture policy in the next long-term budget, questioning how the Presidency will guarantee the green transition, food security and a long-term funding for nature, while building a competitive and resilient Europe.

Cyprus' History

History of Cyprus

Cyprus, officially known as the Republic of Cyprus, is a Mediterranean country situated in Southern Europe. It covers an area of 9,251 square kilometres and has a population of approximately 1.37 million people as of February 2026. Its capital city is Nicosia, which also serves as the political, economic and administrative centre of the country.

On 30 December 1963, British General Peter Young demarcated a provisional buffer zone across Nicosia in an effort to halt escalating intercommunal violence between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. More than five decades later, the ceasefire line remains a physical and political fault line.

The language of the majority is Greek and of the minority, Turkish. The Greek Cypriots are primarily Eastern Orthodox Christians. The Turkish Cypriots are Sunni Muslims. There are smaller Maronite, Armenian, Roman Catholic, and Anglican Christian communities on the island. The Greek Cypriot sector joined the EU in 2004 and adopted the euro as its official currency in 2008. While the official currency in the Turkish Cypriot is the Turkish Lira.

Cyprus is a presidential republic. The president holds executive power and is both head of state and government. The national parliament is called the House of Representatives. Nikos Christodoulides is the 8th and current President of the Republic of Cyprus, in office since February 28, 2023.

Historical Overview:

Cyprus' long and complex history has been influenced by its geographical location as it places the nation at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa. Hunter-gatherers first arrived on Cyprus around between 11,000 to 10,000 BC, making it one of the oldest continuously inhabited regions in the Mediterranean. In antiquity, Cyprus was influenced by Mycenaean Greeks, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Persians, before becoming part of the Hellenistic empire.

Source:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Cyprus/People>

https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/eu-countries/cyprus_ru

In 58 BC, the Roman Republic annexed Cyprus. Christianity was introduced by Saint Lazarus and apostles Paul, Barnabas and Mark in the 1st century AD, and would become an integral element of the Cypriot identity. At the time of the medieval period, Cyprus passed through a succession of foreign rulers, including the Arab-Byzantine condominium, the Frankish Lusignan dynasty, and the Republic of Venice.

In 1571, the Ottoman Empire conquered Cyprus and ruled the island for over three centuries. Ottoman administration reshaped Cypriot society, introducing new religious and social structures. In 1878, administrative control of Cyprus was transferred to Britain, and the island formally became a British colony in 1925. This was a result of an exchange for British military support for the Ottoman Empire should Russia attempt to take possession of Ottoman territories in the Middle East. The 20th century was marked by growing movements for self-determination, particularly among Greek Cypriots as they sought union with Greece. After a period of anti-colonial struggle, Cyprus gained independence in 1960 under a power-sharing constitution. Intercommunal tensions, however, persisted and escalated into violence.

In 1963, Nicosia was divided by a provisional buffer zone, separating the Cypriot Greek majority and Cypriot Turkish minority. By 1974, a Greek-backed coup aimed at union with Greece prompted a military intervention by Turkey. The unrest culminated in the extending of the division zone to cross the entire island, becoming about 180 kilometres long. Greek Cypriots resided in the south of the island and Turkish Cypriots in the north. The northern part declared itself the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983, which is solely recognised by Turkey. The division remains unresolved despite ongoing diplomatic efforts.

In the post-1974 period, the Republic of Cyprus developed into a stable democratic state with a strong service-based economy. The nation joined the European Union in 2004 and adopted the euro in 2008. Today, Cyprus continues to navigate the political challenges of division while maintaining its role as an EU member state and an important regional actor in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Source:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Cyprus/People>

<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/cyprus-becomes-british-crown-colony>

<https://www.icip.cat/perlapau/en/article/nicosia-the-last-divided-capital-in-the-world/>

Key Dates of Cyprus' History

A chronology of key events:

1914 - Cyprus annexed by Britain after more than 300 years of Ottoman rule. Britain had occupied the island in 1878, although it remained nominally under Ottoman sovereignty.

1925 - Becomes British colony.

1955 - Greek Cypriots begin guerrilla war against British rule in pursuit of unification with Greece.

1956 - Archbishop Makarios, head of enosis campaign, deported to the Seychelles.

1959 - Archbishop Makarios returns and is elected president.

Independence

1960 - Cyprus gains independence after Greek and Turkish communities reach agreement on a constitution.

1963 - President Makarios raises Turkish fears by proposing constitutional changes which would abrogate power-sharing arrangements. Inter-communal violence erupts. Turkish community withdraws from power-sharing.

1964 - United Nations peacekeeping force set up. Turkish Cypriots withdraw into defended enclaves.

Turkish Troops Invade

1974 - Military junta in Greece backs coup against President Makarios. Within days Turkish troops land in north. Greek Cypriots flee their homes.

Turkish forces occupy 1/3 of the island, enforce partition between north and south roughly along the "Green Line" ceasefire line drawn up by UN forces in 1963.

The UN Security Council passes a resolution calling on Turkey to withdraw its troops from Cyprus. Turkey refuses to do so.

1975 - Turkish Cypriots establish independent administration, with Rauf Denktash as president.

1977 - President Makarios dies, succeeded by Spyros Kyprianou.

1980 - UN-sponsored peace talks resume.

Source:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17219505>

Turkish Cypriots proclaim republic

1983 - Mr Denktash suspends talks and proclaims Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognised only by Turkey.

1998 - EU lists Cyprus as potential member. Government drops plans to install Russian-made anti-aircraft missiles after Turkey threatens military action.

2001 June - UN Security Council renews its 36-year mission. 2,400 peacekeepers patrol the Greek and Turkish Cypriot buffer zone.

2002 January - Clerides and Denktash begin UN-sponsored negotiations after decades of stalled talks. Minds are concentrated by EU membership aspirations.

2002 November - UN Secretary General Kofi Annan presents a comprehensive peace plan for Cyprus which envisages a federation with two constituent parts, presided over by a rotating presidency.

2002 December - EU summit in Copenhagen invites Cyprus to join in 2004 provided the two communities agree to UN plan by early spring 2003. Without reunification, only the internationally recognised Greek Cypriot part of the island will gain membership.

2003 April - Turkish and Greek Cypriots cross island's dividing "green line" for first time in 30 years after Turkish Cypriot authorities ease border restrictions.

2004 April - Twin referendums on whether to accept UN reunification plan in last-minute bid to achieve united EU entry. Plan is endorsed by Turkish Cypriots but overwhelmingly rejected by Greek Cypriots.

EU Accession

2004 May - Cyprus is one of 10 new states to join the EU, but does so as a divided island.

2004 December - Turkey agrees to extend its EU customs union agreement to 10 new member states, including Cyprus. The Turkish prime minister says this does not amount to a formal recognition of Cyprus.

2005 August - Cypriot airliner crashes near Athens, Greece, killing all 121 passengers and crew. It is the island's worst peacetime disaster.

2006 July - UN-sponsored talks between President Tassos Papadopolous and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat agree a series of confidence-building measures and contacts between the two communities.

2007 January-March - Greek and Turkish Cypriots demolish barriers dividing the old city of Nicosia. The moves are seen as paving the way for another official crossing point on what used to be a key commercial thoroughfare.

2008 January - Cyprus adopts the euro.

New Talks

2008 March - President Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat agree to start formal talks on reunification.

2008 April - Symbolic Ledra Street crossing between the Turkish and Greek sectors of Nicosia reopened for first time since 1964.

2010 April - Dervis Eroglu, who favours independence, wins the Turkish north's leadership contest, beating pro-unity incumbent Mehmet Ali Talat.

2010 May - Re-unification talks resume with a new hardliner representing the Turkish north.

2011 May - Parliamentary polls. Main right-wing opposition party DISY wins by a narrow margin.

2011 July - Navy chief Andreas Ioannides and 12 others die when people when impounded Iranian containers of explosives blow up at the main naval base and the country's main power plant.

2011 September - Cyprus begins exploratory drilling for oil and gas, prompting a diplomatic row with Turkey, which responds by sending an oil vessel to waters off northern Cyprus.

2012 April - The UN cancels plans for a Cyprus conference, citing lack of progress on any of the substantial differences between the two sides.

Turkey's Turkish Petroleum Corporation begins drilling for oil and gas onshore in northern Cyprus despite protests from the Cypriot government that the action is illegal.

Financial Crisis

2012 June - Cyprus appeals to European Union for financial assistance to shore up its banks, which are heavily exposed to the stumbling Greek economy.

2013 February - Democratic Rally conservative candidate Nicos Anastasiades wins presidential election.

2013 March - President Anastasiades secures €10bn bank bailout from the European Union and IMF. Laiki Bank, the country's second-biggest, is wound down and deposit-holders with more than €100,000 will face big losses.

2014 October - Cyprus suspends peace talks with Turkish-held Cypriots in protest against what it calls efforts by Turkey to prevent it from exploring gas fields south of the island. The EU and US express concern over the tension.

2015 February - At talks with Russia's Vladimir Putin, President Anastasiades agrees to let the Russian navy have access to Cypriot ports.

2015 May - Government and Turkish Cypriot negotiators resume talks on reunification, which end inconclusively in July 2017.

2016 January - President Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci make an unprecedented joint New Year television address in the midst of reunification talks.

2018 November - First new buffer-zone crossings are opened in eight years at Deryneia in the east and Lefke in the west.

2020 October - Anti-reunification nationalist Ersin Tatar wins narrow victory in Turkish Cypriot presidential election.

2021 September - After a meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and President Anastasiades in New York, Tatar says talks on the future of Cyprus will not start unless they take into consideration "the sovereign equality and international status of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus".

Political Situation

Structure and functioning of the House of Representatives

Government and Society

Constitutional Framework

The constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, adopted in 1960, provided that executive power be exercised by a Greek Cypriot president and a Turkish Cypriot vice president, elected to five-year terms by universal suffrage, and that there be a Council of Ministers (cabinet) comprising seven Greek Cypriot and three Turkish Cypriot members. It also called for an elected House of Representatives with 50 seats, divided between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the proportion of 35 to 15 and elected for terms of five years.

The constitution, derived from the negotiations in Zürich, Switzerland, in 1959 between representatives of the governments of Greece and Turkey, was not widely accepted by the citizens of the new republic. The Greek Cypriots, whose struggle against the British had been for enosis (union with Greece) and not for independence, regretted the failure to achieve this national aspiration. As a result, it was not long after the establishment of the republic that the Greek Cypriot majority began to regard many of the provisions, particularly those relating to finance and to local government, as unworkable. Proposals for amendments were rejected by the Turkish government, and, after the outbreak of fighting between the two Cypriot communities in late 1963, the constitution was suspended. In the Republic of Cyprus after the Turkish occupation of 1974, the constitution's provisions remained in force where practicable; the main formal change has been the increase in the number of seats in the House of Representatives to 80, although the 24 seats allocated to Turks have remained vacant.

On the Turkish side of the demarcation line, there have been, since 1974, a popularly elected president, prime minister, and legislative assembly, all serving five-year terms of office. A new constitution was approved for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) by its electorate in 1985.

Local government in the Republic of Cyprus is at the district, municipal, rural municipality, and village levels. District officers are appointed by the government; local councils are elected, as are the mayors of municipalities.

Source:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Cyprus/Government-and-society>

Justice

The legal code of Cyprus is based on Roman law. In the Greek Cypriot zone judges are appointed by the government, but the judiciary is entirely independent of the executive power. The Supreme Court is the highest court and also serves as the final appeals court in the republic. A Permanent Assize Court has criminal jurisdiction over the whole island, and district courts handle criminal, civil, and admiralty matters. The Turkish Cypriot zone has a similar system of justice.

Political Process

The oldest established political party in the Republic of Cyprus is the Progressive Party of the Working People (Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou; AKEL), founded in 1941. A pro-Moscow communist party that controlled the principal trade union federation, it received about one-third of the vote in the first 25 years of the Republic of Cyprus. Following the collapse of communism in Russia and eastern Europe, AKEL lost much of its support, with some reformists breaking away to form their own party. Other parties have had varying success. Among them are the Movement of Social Democrats EDEK (Kinima Sosialdimokraton EDEK) and the Democratic Rally (Dimokratikos Synagermos; DISY). In the Turkish Cypriot zone the major parties include the National Unity Party (Ulusal Birlik Partisi), the Communal Liberation Party (Toplumcu Kurtuluş Partisi), and the Republican Turkish Party (Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi).

Health

Health standards in Cyprus are high because of a favourable climate and well-organized public and private health services. Since the eradication of malaria shortly after World War II and, later, that of echinococcosis (hydatid disease), the island has been free from major diseases. Life expectancy is about 75 years for men and 80 years for women, and the infant mortality rate is low.

Housing

Housing became a major preoccupation of the Republic of Cyprus following the Turkish invasion of 1974 and the subsequent displacement and relocation of Greek Cypriots to the south of the country. The government engaged in a long-term program to stimulate the construction of low-cost housing, provided low-interest loans for home buyers, and temporarily housed refugees in homes abandoned by Turkish Cypriots who fled to the north during the war. The government has continued to provide rent subsidies for thousands of refugee families and has also provided housing assistance for other low-income families.

Education

In the Greek Cypriot sector, 12 grades of free education are provided for children beginning at age 5; schooling is compulsory through age 15. The last three years may be taken at a technical or vocational school or at a lyceum, the latter offering courses stressing such fields as classical studies, the sciences, or economics. Postsecondary facilities include schools for teacher training, technical instruction, hospitality training, tourism guides, nursing, public health, and police work. Greek Cypriots opened the University of Cyprus in 1992; many students, however, attend universities abroad, especially in Greece, Britain, or the United States.

The education system in the Turkish sector is administered separately, and the Turkish Cypriots maintain an excellent public-school system with facilities similar to those in the Greek sector and several institutions of specialized postsecondary education. As in the Greek sector, many Turkish Cypriots travel abroad (most to Turkey) for postsecondary education. The fine educational opportunities provided by both the Greek and the Turkish administrations have not been without drawbacks, as many of the most qualified Cypriot graduates—both Greek and Turkish—seek employment abroad.

Cultural Life

Daily Life and Social Customs

The culture of Cyprus is divided between the northern Turkish and the southern Greek sections of the country. Since 1974 the Turkish community in northern Cyprus has promoted its own Turkish and Islamic culture, supporting its own newspapers and periodicals and changing many place-names to Turkish. The anniversary of the proclamation of the TRNC (November 15) is celebrated in the north, as are traditional Muslim holidays.

Greek Cypriots speak a dialect of Greek and maintain a somewhat ambivalent attitude about mainland Greeks. However, most Greek Cypriots who go abroad for their postsecondary education travel to Greece, and these young people share in the popular culture of Greece, which is itself increasingly cosmopolitan. Even so, Greek Cypriots take care to preserve their traditional culture and to observe such important holidays as Easter (and the pre-Easter Carnival) and Anthestiria, a spring flower festival.

Despite years of civil conflict in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, the younger generation of Greek Cypriots has grown up in a relatively peaceful, settled, and prosperous society that encompasses aspects of traditional culture while welcoming world trends in dress and entertainment. These trends were introduced not only by the mass media but also by a tremendous influx of young travelers, whose presence can be felt in the dance clubs and bars that now abound throughout the island.

Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike enjoy a rich tradition of handicrafts and folk art. Among the best-known expressions of this art internationally are Cypriot lacework—particularly that produced in the town of Lefkara near Nicosia—and silversmithing, which is practiced throughout the island.

Geography has left Cyprus heir to numerous culinary traditions—particularly those of the Levant, Anatolia, and Greece—but some dishes, such as the island's halloumi cheese, *pourgouri* (a dish of boiled cracked wheat), *hiromeri* (a pressed, smoked, and aged leg of pork), and *sucuk* (a confection made of thickened grape juice and almonds), are purely Cypriot. As in much of the Mediterranean world, the appetizer, or *meze*, in Cyprus plays a central role, often taking the place of the *entrée*. Fresh fruits and vegetables are a part of every meal, and Cyprus has long been famous for its wine, viticulture having been practiced on the island for thousands of years.

The Arts

Cyprus has figured in the literature of Europe for thousands of years, from the works of Ionic lyric poets to modern travel memoirs such as Lawrence Durrell's *Bitter Lemons* (1957). Literary traditions are strong on the island itself. Drawing on oral tradition, on classical forms—such as the *tekerleme* (rigmarole) and *mani* (quatrain)—and on contemporary styles, Turkish Cypriot singers such as Acar Akalın and Neşe Yaşın have developed a body of work that is well known on the Turkish mainland though largely untranslated into other languages. Contemporary Greek Cypriot poets are somewhat better known beyond the island, having been translated into other European languages. Several literary journals are published, and small presses issue hundreds of books in Greek and Turkish each year. Poetry is also an important element in the growing “peace culture” movement, which seeks to forge social and cultural links across the island's ethnic divide.

Numerous painters and sculptors work in Cyprus, and the Cultural Services office keeps the state's collection of modern Cypriot art on permanent exhibition and sponsors the annual Kypria International Festival of music and theatrical performances. In the village of Lemba, near Paphos, the Cyprus College of Art runs courses for postgraduate art students. The government encourages young composers, musicians, and folk dance groups. Both the Turkish and the Greek Cypriot communities have active film industries, and Cypriot motion pictures have received a number of awards in international competitions. Classical and folk music enjoy a wide following among Cypriots of all ages, and the respective folk music traditions of the Greek and Turkish communities, combined with international styles, have contributed to the development of native Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot popular music styles.

Cultural Institutions

The ancient cultural traditions of Cyprus are maintained partly by private enterprise and partly by government sponsorship, especially through the Cultural Services office of the Republic of Cyprus's Ministry of Education and Culture, which publishes books, awards prizes for literature, and promotes Cypriot publications. Cities have public libraries, as do many rural communities. The government-sponsored Cyprus Theatre Organization stages plays by contemporary Cypriot dramatists as well as classical works. The ancient theatres of Salamis and Soli in the Turkish sector and Kourion (Curium) in the Greek portion have been restored; a variety of plays are staged at Kourion, and a Greek theatre has been built at Nicosia.

Many noteworthy buildings survive from the Lusignan and Venetian periods, in particular the Gothic cathedrals at Nicosia and Famagusta and the Abbey of Bellapais near Kyrenia. There are other Gothic churches throughout the island. Orthodox Christians also built numerous churches in a distinctive style that was often influenced by the Gothic; the interiors of these illustrate the continued development of Byzantine art. Cyprus has notable examples of medieval and Renaissance military architecture, such as the castles of Kyrenia, St. Hilarion, Buffavento, and Kantara and the elaborate Venetian fortifications of Nicosia and Famagusta.

Additional sites of cultural significance include the town of Paphos, held to be the legendary birthplace of Aphrodite, which houses a temple constructed in her honour dating from the 12th century bce; the painted churches of the Troodos region, a complex of Byzantine churches and monasteries renowned for their display of murals in Byzantine and post-Byzantine styles; and the Neolithic settlements at Choirokotia, inhabited from the 7th to the 4th millennium bce. These sites were designated UNESCO World Heritage sites in 1980, 1985, and 1998, respectively.

Sports and Recreation

Sports play a major role in the Greek Cypriot community, as they have since Classical times, when stadiums stood at the heart of the island's chief cities. Through the Cyprus Sports Organization, an official body formed in 1969, the government has built stadiums, sports halls, and swimming pools and has subsidized associations and clubs for a wide spectrum of sports; there are a professional football (soccer) league and a semiprofessional basketball league.

Cypriot athletes began to compete in the Olympic Games in 1924 but as members of the Greek national team. In 1978 the Cyprus National Olympic Committee was admitted to the International Olympic Committee, and the Republic of Cyprus has been sending its own national team—consisting of athletes from the Greek Cypriot sector only—to the Games since 1980. There have been unsuccessful attempts at athletic cooperation or contests between the Turkish and Greek communities, and international sports-governing bodies have not recognized the sports associations in the Turkish sector of Cyprus.

Media and Publishing

Television and radio are controlled in the Greek sector by the semigovernmental Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation and are financed by government subsidies, taxes, and advertising. Throughout the island, broadcasts are in Greek, Turkish, English, and Armenian, and daily and weekly newspapers are published in Greek, Turkish, and English. The Turkish sector receives broadcasts from Turkey.

REPORTS ON ECONOMIC SITUATION IN CYPRUS

Economic Forecast for Cyprus conducted by the European Commission

<https://cypruspresidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/programme/programme-of-the-cyprus-presidency/>

Cyprus' Recovery and Resilience Plan

https://reforms-investments.ec.europa.eu/cyprus-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT 2025 Country Report - Cyprus

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fe1e50b4-4164-11f0-b9f2-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>



CYPRUS' GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE: ARTICLES AND REPORTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Cyprus and the expanding Iran conflict, when geography becomes exposure

https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/en/cp_article/cyprus-and-the-expanding-iran-conflict-when-geography-becomes-exposure/

War in the Middle East: What implications for the EU and the world?

<https://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/commentary/war-middle-east-what-implications-eu-and-world>

Timeline: How a week of war unfolded in the Middle East after US-Israeli strikes on Iran

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iran-us-israel-war-timeline-strikes-b2933134.html>

OTHER RELEVANT REPORTS ON CYPRUS

The Political Situation

Information on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus - January 2026

<https://www.gov.cy/mfa/en/news/>

Environmental, Social and Regional Issues

Cyprus's Climate Action Strategy - EPRS February 2025

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2025/769495/EPRS_BRI\(2025\)769495_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2025/769495/EPRS_BRI(2025)769495_EN.pdf)

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) report on Cyprus

<https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-cyprus/1680aa6876>

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European Parliament
FORMER MEMBERS
ASSOCIATION

26-27 March 2026

FMA Visit to Cyprus

