

C Y P R U S

SECTION A

Capital

Nicosia

Area

9,250 sq km (3,572 sq mi)

Form of government

Republic

GDP—per capita

Purchasing power parity Greek sector—\$15,400 (1998 est.)

Turkish sector—\$5,000 (1998 est.)

Population

754,064 (July 1999 est.)

Ethnic composition

Greek 78.0%

Turkish 18.0%

Other 4.0%

Official language

Greek, Turkish

Minority languages

Turkish can be considered to be a minority language with 18%, Armenian, Maronites

Legislation dealing with the use of languages

Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, adopted on August 16, 1960

The 1960 Constitution accorded equal status to the Greek and Turkish languages. All legislative, executive and administrative acts and documents were to be drafted in both languages, while judicial proceedings were to be conducted and judgments drawn up in the language of the parties concerned. (Article 3 and 18, C)

Background notes

The people of Cyprus represent two main ethnic groups, Greek and Turkish. The Greek Cypriots, who constitute the majority, are descended from a mixture of aboriginal inhabitants and immigrants from the Peloponnese who colonized Cyprus about 1100 BC and assimilated subsequent settlers up to the 16th century. The Turkish Cypriots are the descendants of the soldiers of the Ottoman army that conquered the island in 1571 and of immigrants from Anatolia brought in by the Sultan's government shortly thereafter. Since 1974 additional immigrants from Anatolia, with their families, have been brought in to work vacant land and increase the total labor force.

For hundreds of years, Cyprus has been home to a mixed population of ethnic Greeks and Turks. But even after Cyprus gained independence from The United Kingdom in 1960, members of the Greek Cypriot majority agitated for a formal union with Greece. Widespread ethnic violence in 1963 led to the Turkish minority's withdrawal from the government in 1964. The Cyprus National Guard, under the command of Greek officers, staged a coup in 1974. Turkey responded by invading Cyprus and seizing the northern third of the island, home to the Turkish Cypriot minority. A cease-fire line was established after a month of fighting. Cyprus remains divided into the mainly Greek Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a state recognized by no other nation but Turkey. Complicating matters further, Turkey has been seeking admission to the European Union for more than three decades and strongly opposes Cyprus's integration into the Union, on the grounds that the Greek Cypriot government does not represent the whole island. Greek Cypriots, however, view Turkey as a foreign occupation force.

SECTION B

The use of language in everyday life e.g. education, broadcasting and other

SCHOOLS

At the beginning of the 1990s, there was an abundance of qualified teachers for all levels and types of schools, as well as administrative personnel, all of whom were accredited by a special committee of the Ministry of Education. All public schools had uniform curricula; the preparation of school

textbooks was the responsibility of committees of teachers and administrators, working in close cooperation with educational authorities in Greece. Some instructional material for both primary and secondary education was donated by the Greek government. Cypriot schools were also well provided with modern teaching equipment.

The Greek Cypriot education system consisted of preprimary and primary schools, secondary general and secondary technical/vocational schools, and special schools for the blind, deaf, and other teachable handicapped persons. In addition, there were institutions for teacher training, specialized instruction, and informal education. As of 1990, there was no university in the Republic of Cyprus. Until one was opened in the early 1990s, further studies had to be pursued abroad. There were a small number of private schools.

Did the country ratify any international treaty dealing with the protection of minorities?

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was ratified on June 4, 1996 and enacted on February 1, 1998.

The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages was signed on November 12, 1992.

SECTION C

Did the country ratify any international treaty dealing with the protection of minorities?

Updated (September 2002)

On August 27, 2002 Cyprus officially ratified the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

As Greek and Turkish are the official languages in Cyprus, the Charter only applies to Armenian, which is considered to be a non-territorial language (a language used by nationals of the state, which differs from the languages used by the rest of the population, but which, although traditionally used within the territory of the state, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof).

Out of 850,000 inhabitants of the island 2,000 belong to the Armenian minority. The Armenians have three elementary schools and one high school with instructions in their mother tongue, Greek and English. They also have churches and access to one hour of broadcasting in Armenian.

The Charter will enter into force on December 1, 2002.

So far 12 members of the Council of Europe have signed the document and 17 have ratified it.

Source: Eurolang, www.eurolang.net, Brussels, August 28, 2002, by Margret Oberhofer

Updated (January 2003)

The ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages deposited by the Republic of Cyprus entered into force on December 1, 2002. Cyprus signed the Charter on November 12, 1992 and ratified it on August 26, 2002.

The declaration only mentions Armenian as a non-territorial language but does not take into account the Maronite Arabian language, which, according to the consulted source,¹ is spoken by 1,300 speakers within a community (6,000 members) living on the island since the 8th Century.

Armenians, on the other hand, have a community of 2,000 speakers and came to the island between 1915 and 1920.

Source: Mercator News; December 2002;
<http://www.ciemen.org/mercator/index-gb.htm>

¹ <http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/chypre.htm>

APPENDIX A

MAP OF CYPRUS



APPENDIX B

CYPRUS - CONSTITUTION

(Adopted on August 16, 1960)

(Document Status on August 16, 1960)

Article 2

For the purposes of this Constitution:

1. the Greek Community comprises all citizens of the Republic who are of Greek origin and whose mother tongue is Greek or who share the Greek cultural traditions or who are members of the Greek Orthodox Church;
2. the Turkish Community comprises all citizens of the Republic who are of Turkish origin and whose mother tongue is Turkish or who share the Turkish cultural traditions or who are Moslems.

Article 3

1. The official languages of the Republic are Greek and Turkish.
2. Legislative, executive and administrative acts and documents shall be drawn up in both official languages and shall, where under the express provisions of this Constitution promulgation is required, be promulgated by publication in the official Gazette of the Republic in both official languages.
3. Administrative or other official documents addressed to a Greek or a Turk shall be drawn up in the Greek or the Turkish language respectively.
4. Judicial proceedings shall be conducted or made and judgments shall be drawn up in the Greek language if the parties are Greek, in the Turkish language if the parties are Turkish, and in both the Greek and the Turkish languages if the parties are Greek and Turkish. The official language or languages to be used for such purposes in all other cases shall be specified by the Rules of Court made by the High Court under

Article 163

5. Any text in the official Gazette of the Republic shall be published in both official languages in the same issue.

6.

(1) Any difference between the Greek and the Turkish texts of any legislative, executive or administrative act or document published in the official Gazette of the Republic, shall be resolved by a competent court. (2)

The prevailing text of any law or decision of a Communal Chamber published in the official Gazette of the Republic shall be that of the language of the Communal Chamber concerned.

(3) Where any difference arises between the Greek and the Turkish texts of an executive or administrative act or document which, though not published in the official Gazette of the Republic, has otherwise been published, a statement by the Minister or any other authority concerned as to which the text should prevail or which should be the correct text shall be final and conclusive.

(4) A competent court may grant such remedies as it may deem just in any case of a difference in the texts as aforesaid.

7. The official languages shall be used on coins, currency notes and stamps.

8. Every person shall have the right to address himself to the authorities of the Republic in either of the official languages.

Article 11

4. Every person shall be informed at the time of his arrest in a language, which he understands of the reasons for his arrest and shall be allowed to have the services of a lawyer of his own choosing...

6. The judge before whom the person arrested is brought shall promptly proceed to inquire into the grounds of the arrest in a language understandable by the person arrested and shall, as soon as possible and in any event not later than three days from such appearance, either release the person arrested on such terms as he may deem fit or where the investigation into the commission of the offence for which he has been arrested has not been completed remand him in custody and may remand him in custody from time to time for a period not exceeding eight days at any one time;

Article 12

5. Every person charged with an offence has the following minimum rights:

(a) to be informed promptly and in a language which he understands and in detail of the nature and grounds of the charge preferred against him;...

(e) to have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

Article 28

2. Every person shall enjoy all the rights and liberties provided for in this Constitution without any direct or indirect discrimination against any person on the ground of his community, race, religion, language, sex,

political or other convictions, national or social descent, birth, color, wealth, social class, or on any ground whatsoever, unless there is express provision to the contrary in this Constitution.

Article 30

3. Every person has the right...

(e) to have free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

Article 171

1. In sound and vision broadcasting there shall be programs both for the Greek and the Turkish Communities.

2. The time allotted to programs for the Turkish Community in sound broadcasting shall be not less than seventy-five hours in a seven day week, spread to all days of such week in daily normal periods of transmission:

provided that if the total period of transmissions has to be reduced so that the time allotted to programs for the Greek Community should fall below seventy-five hours in a seven day week, then the time allotted to programs for the Turkish Community in any such week should be reduced by the same number of hours as that by which the time allotted to programs for the Greek Community is reduced below such hours;

provided further that if the time allotted to programs for the Greek Community is increased above one hundred and forty hours in a seven day week, then the time allotted to programs for the Turkish Community shall be increased in the ratio of three hours for the Turkish Community to every seven hours for the Greek Community.

3. In vision broadcasting there shall be allotted three transmission days to the programs for the Turkish Community of every ten consecutive transmission days and the total time allotted to the programs for the Turkish Community in such ten transmission days shall be in the ratio of three hours to seven hours allotted to programs for the Greek Community in such ten transmission days.

4. All official broadcasts in sound and vision shall be made both in Greek and Turkish and shall not be taken into account for the purposes of calculating the time under this Article.

Article 180

1. The Greek and the Turkish texts of this Constitution shall both be originals and shall have the same authenticity and the same legal force.

Article 189

Notwithstanding anything in Article 3 contained, for a period of five years after the date of the coming into operation of this Constitution:

- (a) All laws which under Article 188 will continue to be in force may continue to be in the English language.
- (b) The English language may be used in any proceedings before any court of the Republic.

Note: The complete text of the Constitution and further information on the constitutional background of Cyprus are provided by the International Constitutional Law Project at the University of Wuerzburg.

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