

The Republic of Cyprus and the European Union

The accession of the Union's most politically volatile member

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The European Policies of the EU Member-States

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The Republic of Cyprus and its neighbours in the present day

*NOT TO A FULLY ACCURATE SCALE





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Cyprus was placed under British administration by the Ottomans in 1878, annexed by Britain in 1914, and its annexation was formally recognised by Turkey in 1923.

Strategic geopolitical role

The island is situated in a key location in the Eastern Mediterranean (link between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East), serving a strategic role for trade and military operations.

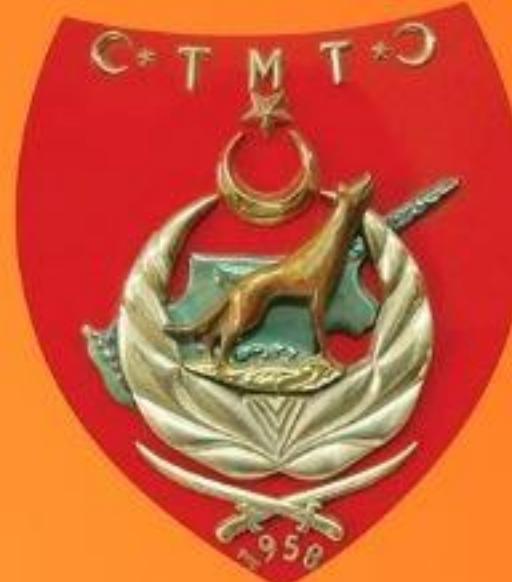
Demographic structure

By the time the island became a British subject, the main demographics of Cyprus were:

- the Christian Greek-Cypriots (the majority, roughly four-fifths),
 - the Muslim Turkish-Cypriots (the minority, one-fifth).



The rise of Enosis VS Taksim



Greek-Cypriots demanded union with Greece (**Enosis**), and saw the annexation of Cyprus by the British as a step closer to this being realised.

Turkish-Cypriots were against Enosis, and viewed British rule as a buffer between the Greek-Cypriots and Enosis.

In 1955, EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) was formed, a Greek-Cypriot paramilitary group that orchestrated attacks against the British.

This led to the Turkish-Cypriots turning to **Taksim** (partition under Turkish protection), and forming the TMT (Turkish Resistance Organisation) in 1957.

London and Zürich Agreements (1959)

The constitutional and legal basis for the Republic of Cyprus:

A presidential republic designed to balance power between the two communities: a Greek-Cypriot president and a Turkish-Cypriot vice-president, with mutual veto rights.

Britain also retains the right to 2 sovereign bases (Akrotiri and Dekelia).

Treaty of Guarantee (1960)

Britain, Turkey and Greece are to act as guarantors with the right to intervene (jointly or unilaterally) in case the constitution broke down.

Cyprus becomes independent on August 16, 1960.

1963-1964:

Inter-communal conflicts ignite, lasting for months, and resulting in the displacement of approximately 25,000 Turkish Cypriots, their withdrawal from institutions and the creation of Turkish Cypriot enclaves.

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The Mason-Dixon line (**Green Line**) is drawn in the capital, Nicosia: acting as a buffer zone dividing the two communities.

The Cyprus issue is also taken to the UN Security Council which issues **Resolution 186**: declaring the creation of a United Nations Peace-keeping Force on the island (**UNFICYP**), with the intent of preventing further bi-communal conflict and the complete collapse of the Republic.

1967:

A military coup d'état takes place in Greece, generating optimism in Greek-Cypriots and fear in Turkish-Cypriots that Enosis is inevitable.

1974:

A coup takes place in Nicosia, the President escapes to London, and a puppet government is installed by the Greek junta.

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Turkey invades Cyprus in two phases:

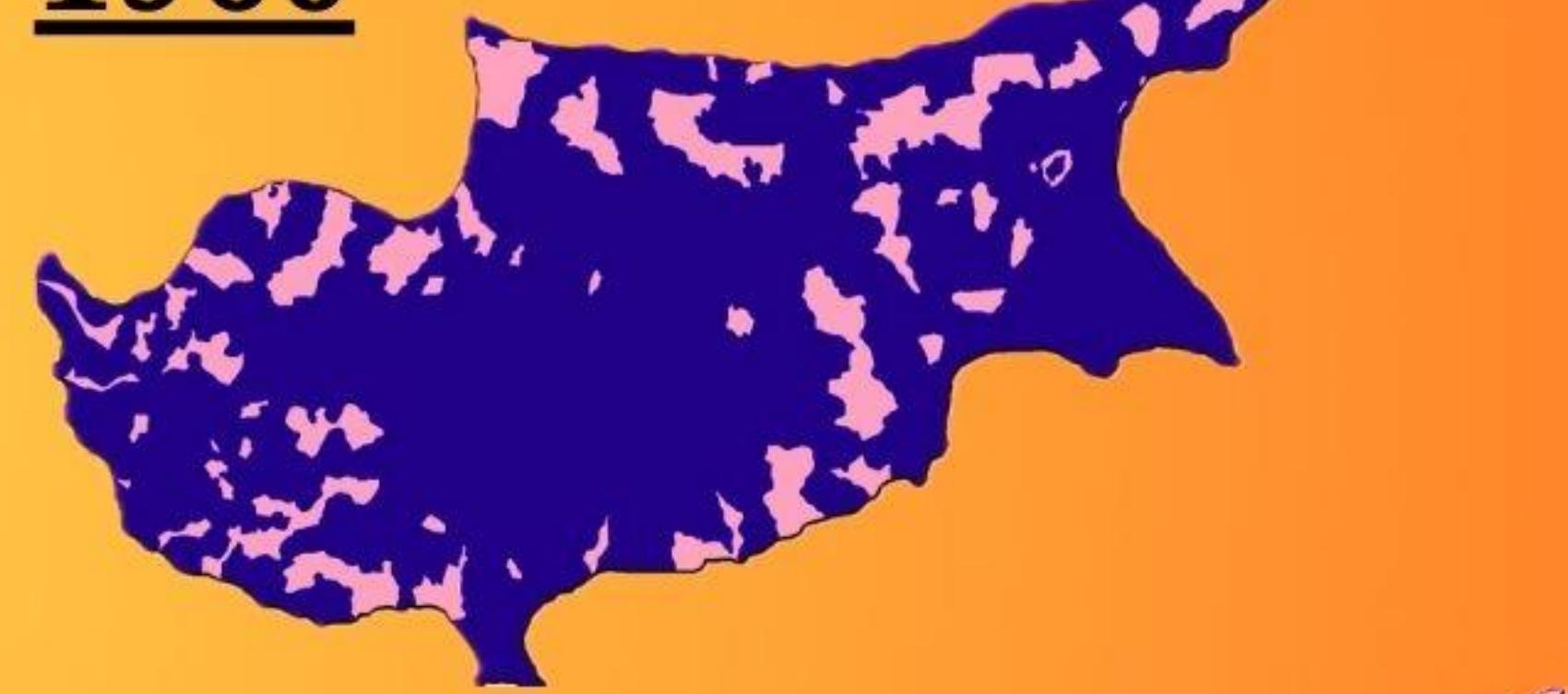
- (1) Nicosia is bombed and vessels are deployed to the northern coast. Within 2 days, Turkey establishes a foothold on the island.
- (2) Turkish forces expand to the entirety of Northern Cyprus, capturing 36% of the Republic's territory before ceasing operations.

The effects of the invasion

- The Greek junta collapses.
- Approximately 250,000 Cypriots are displaced (200,000 Greek-Cypriots, 50,000 Turkish-Cypriots).
- Turkish forces held the northern region of the island, reaching and capturing half of the Nicosia.
- The Green Line was extended across the island, separating the areas under Turkish control from those administered by the Republic of Cyprus, monitored by the UNFICYP forces.

*Demographic shift post-invasion
(where blue represents Greek-Cypriots, and pink Turkish-Cypriots):*

1960



1974



1975:

The Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (TFSC) is declared with Rauf Denktas as president.

1975-1983:

Negotiations take place between the TFSC and the RoC, under the auspices of the UN. They agreed to the principle of reunification under a federal system, but disagreed on the practical elements of such a system, leading to a dead-end.



1983:

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) declares independence.

It is recognised only by Turkey.



2003-2004:

UN-led negotiations take place between the delegations of the two communities with the aim of producing a constitution for a proposed United Republic of Cyprus, a bi-communal bi-zonal federal republic.

Both delegations walked out, leaving the UN Secretary General to complete the final draft on his own. This became known as the **Annan Plan**.

Both communities were called to vote in simultaneous referenda on the adoption of the constitution:

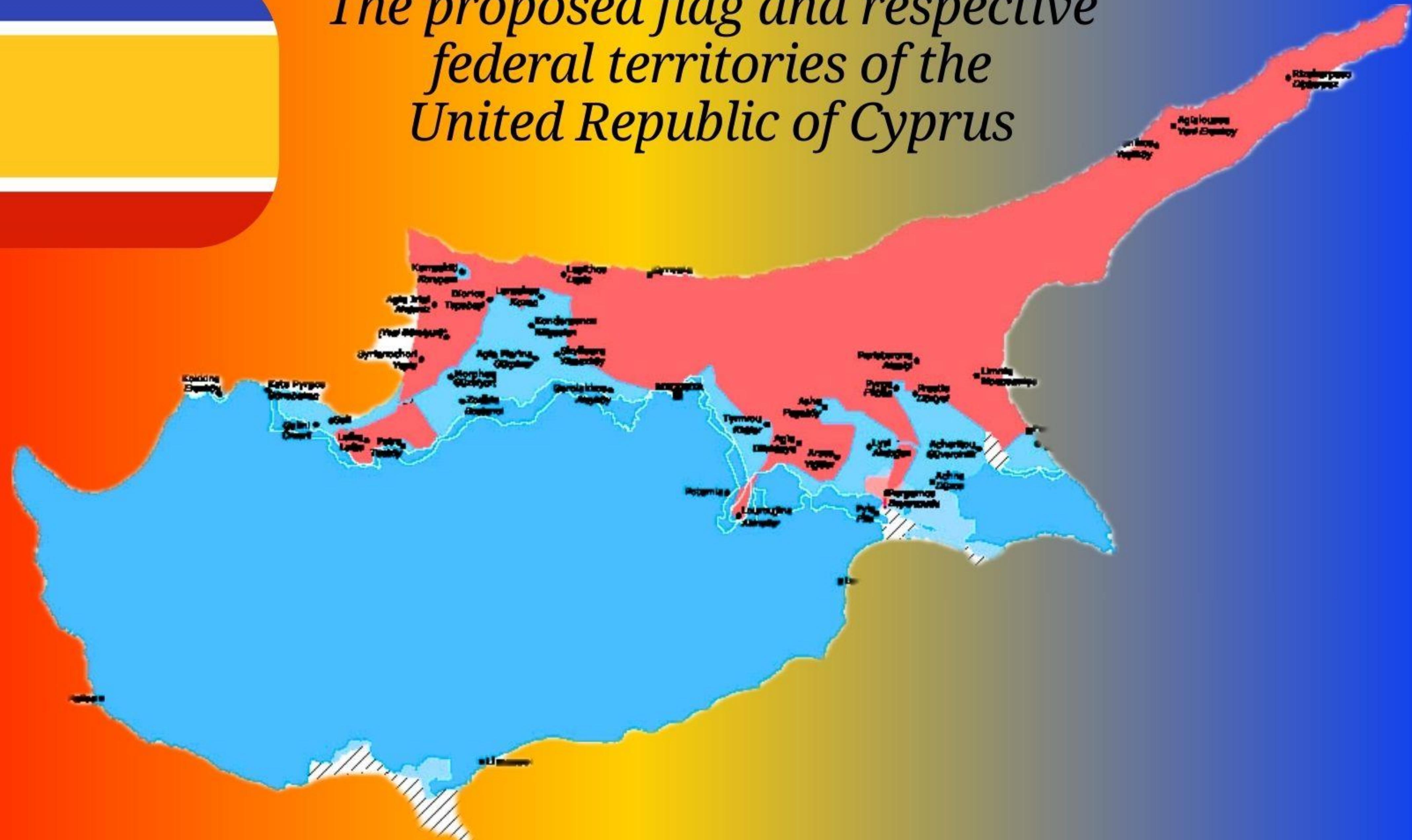
Greek-Cypriot community: 24.2% FOR, 75.8% **AGAINST**.

Turkish-Cypriot community: **64.9% FOR**, 35% AGAINST.

During this time, the first checkpoints opened: allowing Cypriots to cross to each other's side for the first time since 1974.



The proposed flag and respective federal territories of the United Republic of Cyprus



2025 Turkish-Cypriot presidential elections

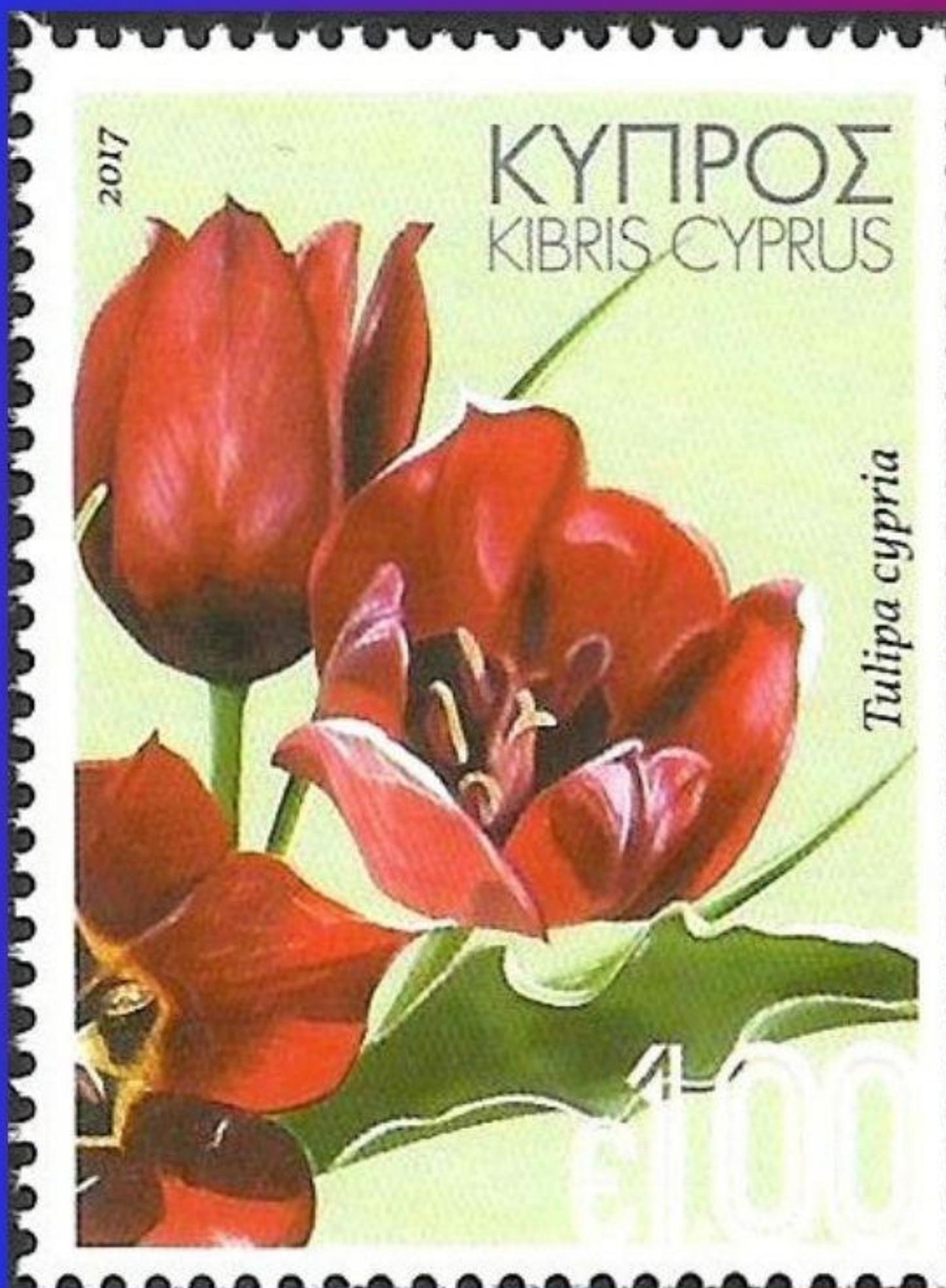
The most recent elections in the North brought about the election of Tufan Erhürman.

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Besides Mustafa Akıncı (2015-2020), he is the only other Turkish-Cypriot leader to have expressed explicit interest in a resolution to the Cyprus issue through the form of a bi-communal bizonal state, as opposed to a 2 state solution.

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tulipa cypria



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G E O G R A P H Y

Cyprus is located in the Eastern Mediterranean sea.

Its closest neighbours, in order of distance, are:

Republic of Türkiye

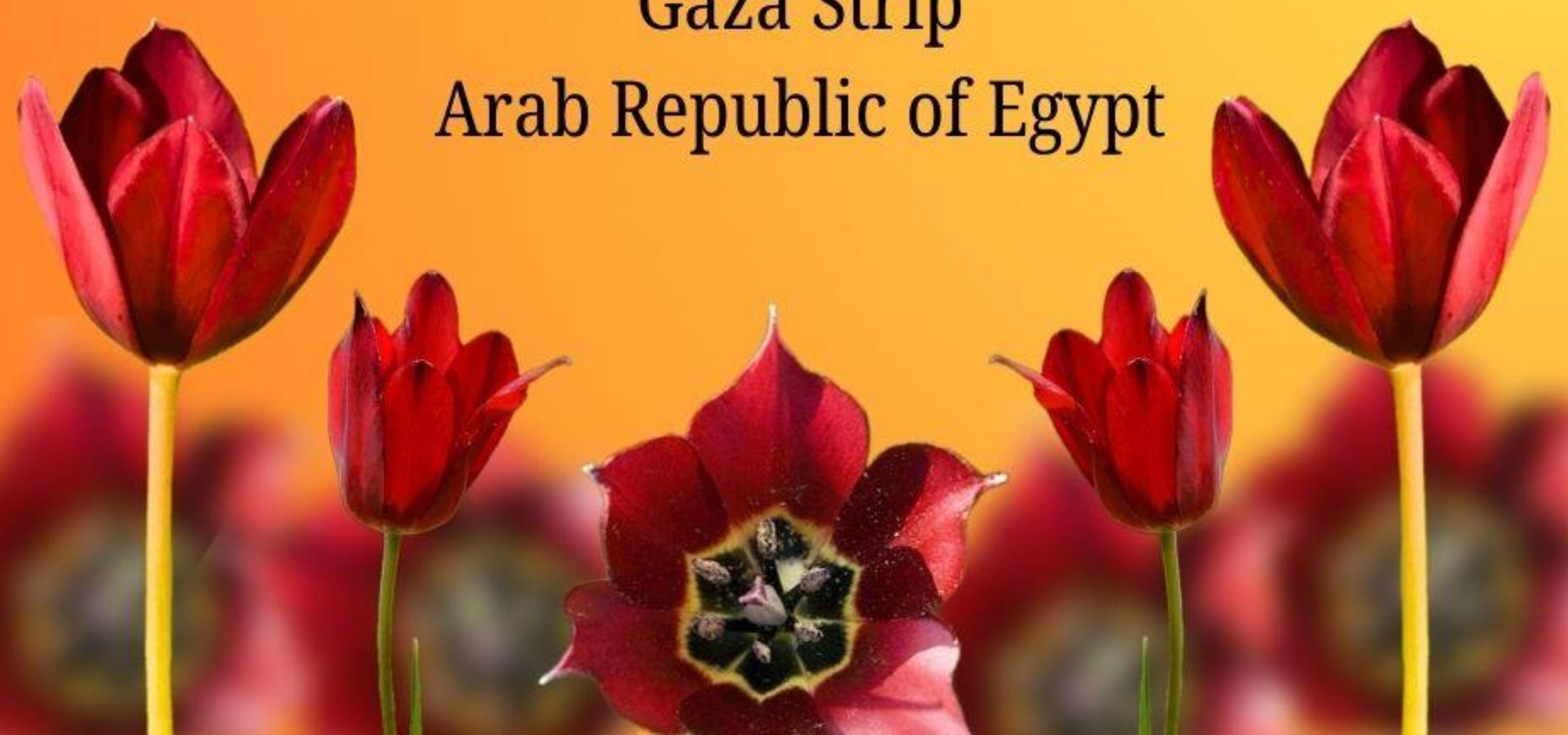
Syrian Arab Republic

Republic of Lebanon

(—)

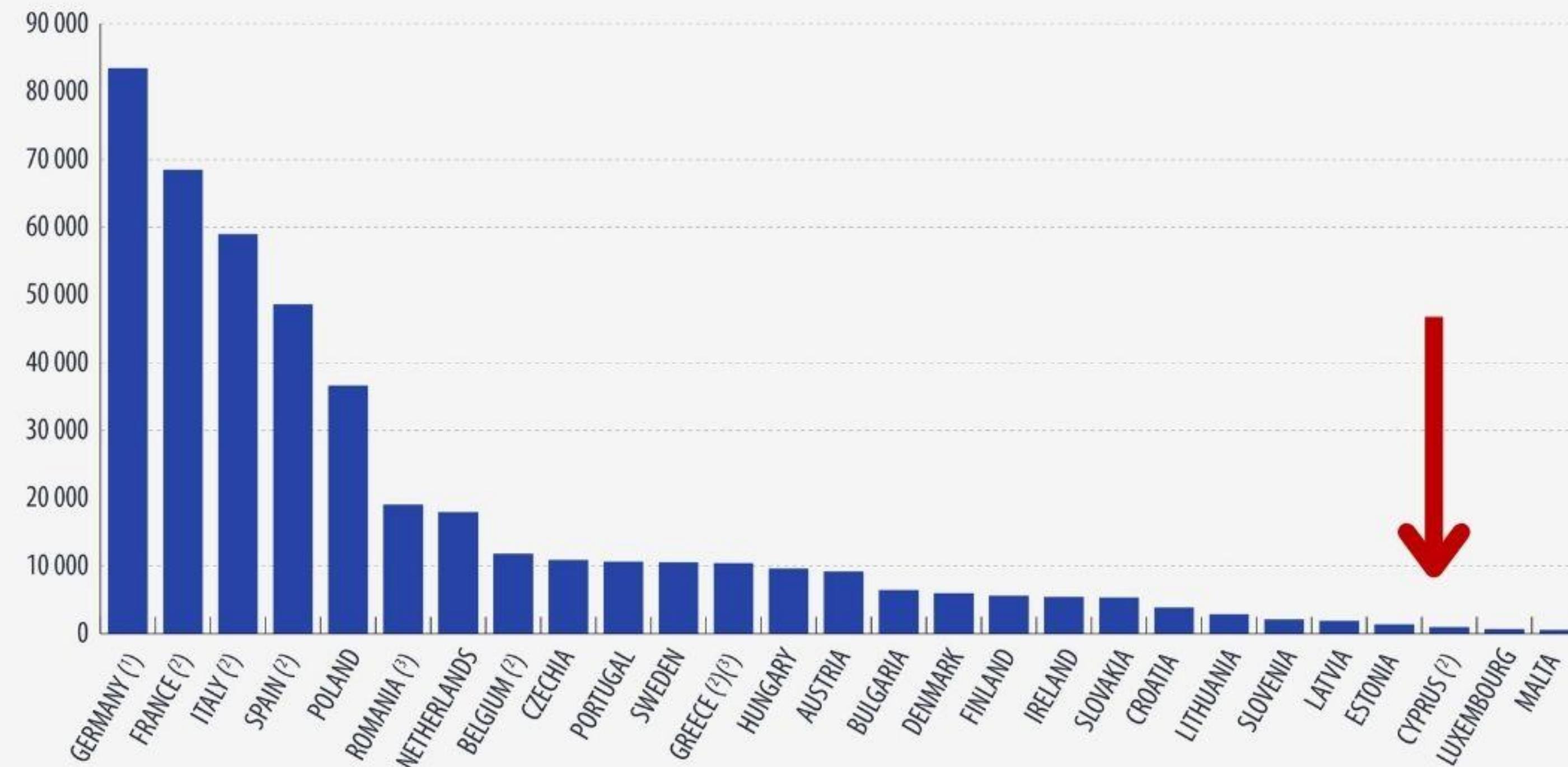
Gaza Strip

Arab Republic of Egypt



Population, 1 January 2025

(in thousands)



(1) Estimate, provisional in 2025. (2) Provisional. (3) Estimate.

eurostat

According to the latest census (2021):

- 77.9% of the population are Cypriots (719.252).
 - 10.1% are EU citizens (93.540).
 - 11.6% are non-EU citizens (107.168).

POPULATION

A very small member-state, with a population of just below a million (979,865) - making it the 3rd smallest member-state with just **0.2% of the total EU population**, and surpassing only Luxembourg and Malta.



The main political parties

ORGANISED ON THE LEFT-RIGHT SPECTRUM BY EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT GROUP

Party Family	Radical Left	Social Democrats	Greens	Liberals & centrists	Christian Democrats & Conservatives	Eurosceptic Conservatives	Radical Right Nationalists	Far right nationalists
EP Group	The Left in the EP	Socialists & Democrats	The Greens - EFA	Renew Europe	European People's Party	European Conservatives & Reformists	Patriots for Europe	Europe of Sovereign Nations
Acronym	GUE-NGL	S&D	Greens	Renew	EPP	ECR	PfE (Patriots)	ESN
National Party Name	Progressive Party of Working People	Democratic Party EDEK Socialist Party			Democratic Rally	National Popular Front		
Party Acronym	AKEL	DIKO EDEK			DISY	ELAM		

Political System

Cyprus is a presidential republic.

- The President (directly elected for a 5-year term) along with the Council of Ministers are the executive branch of government.
- The House of Representatives is the legislative branch, run by 56 directly elected members. Major parties include DISY (28.7%), AKEL (22.4%) and DIKO (11.3%).

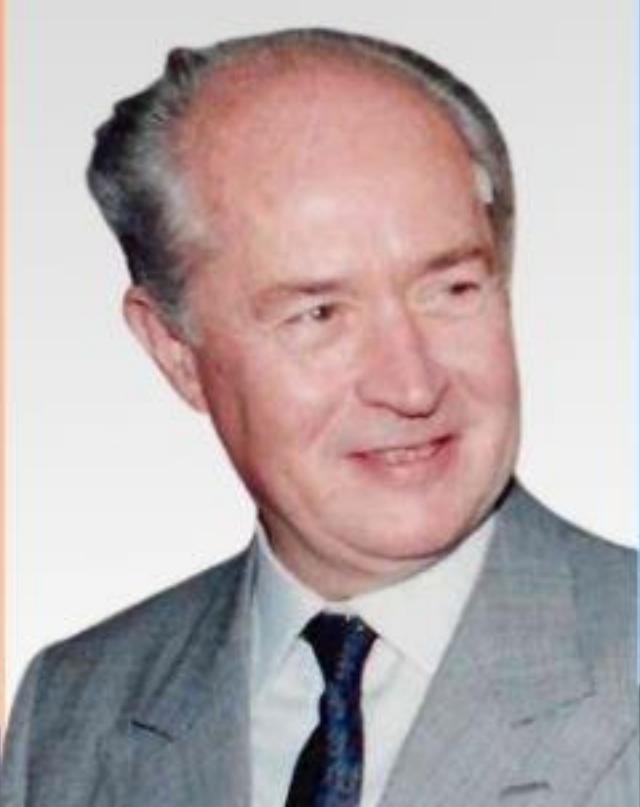
The Vice-President position and 24 House seats have been vacant since the 1963-1964 inter-communal conflicts.



Incumbent President of the Republic, Nikos Christodoulides



Incumbent president of the House, Annita Demetriou

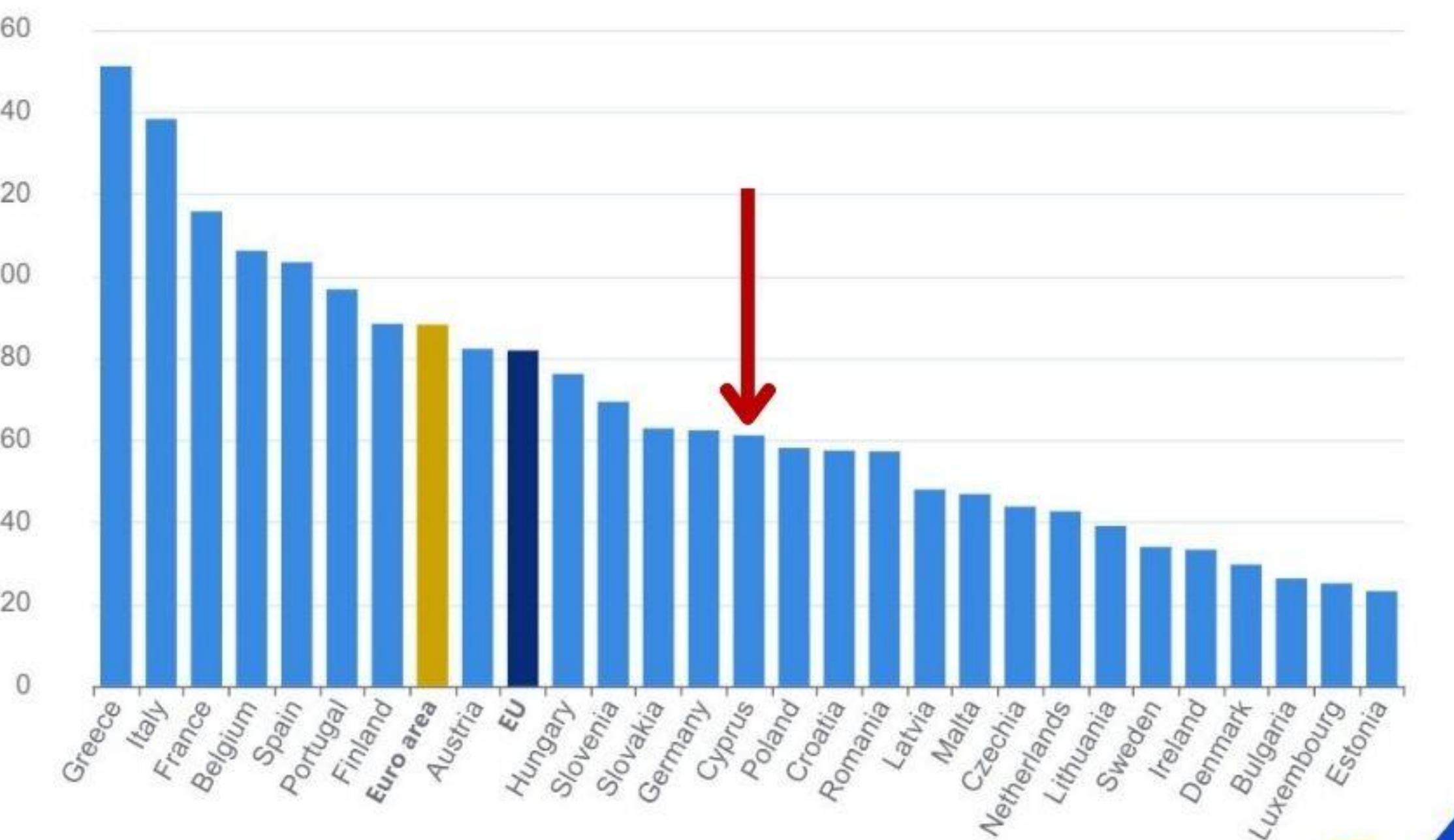
	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT
Archbishop Makarios III	Spyros Kyprianou	George Vassiliou	Glafcos Clerides	Tasos Papadopoulos	Demetris Christofias	Nicos Anastasiades
1960	1977	1988	1993	2003	2008	2013
-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1977	1988	1993	2003	2008	2013	2023
						
						

Economy

GDP per capita: €35,900 (EU: €38,100), accounting for 0.2% of the EU's total GDP.

GDP per capita as % of EU average: 95% (14th).

General government gross debt to GDP ratio, 2025Q2
In percentage



Gross public debt (% of GDP):

65.3% (EU: 87.4%)

Eurostat (Q4 2024)

Unemployment:

4.2% (EU: 6.4%)

Youth unemployment:

12.6% (EU: 15.2%)

Eurostat (September, 2025)

Top Import sources:

- 1) Greece
- 2) Saudi Arabia
- 3) Italy
- 4) China
- 5) Germany
- ⋮

Dependence on the EU Single Market for imports, other key global players also present.

Trade

Mineral products (mostly crude oil) represent the main import. The majority is not destined for home use, but is instead stored, refined and re-exported.

⋮

Refined petroleum represents the overwhelming export every month (>40%), indicating

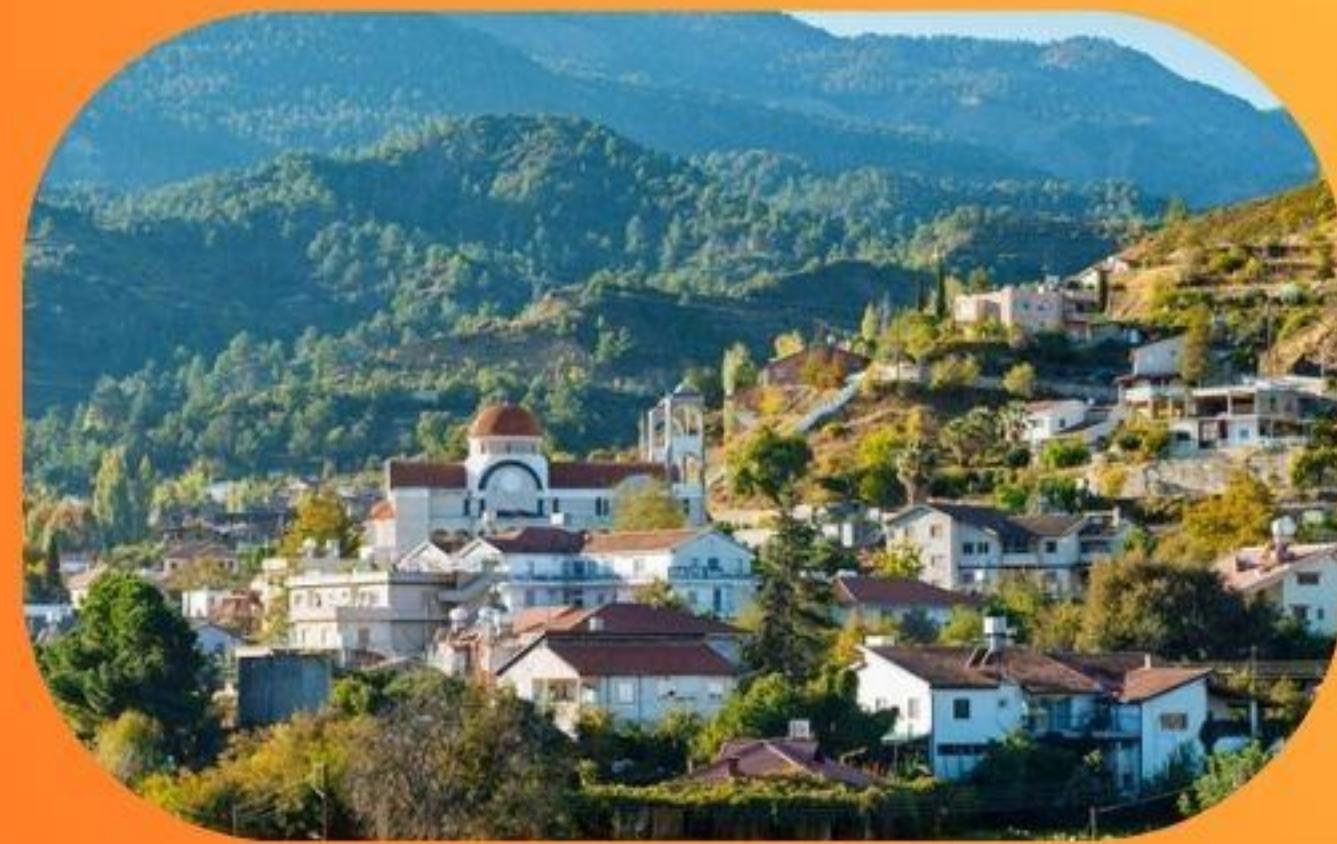
Cyprus's role as a fuel processing and re-export hub.

Trade deficit is the norm.

Top export partners:

- 1) Libya
- 2) Greece
- 3) Lebanon
- 4) Egypt
- 5) United Kingdom
- ⋮

Exports indicative of both Cyprus's geopolitical placement and its historic ties.



Tourism

Makes up a significant part of the Cypriot economy.

In 2024, the estimated revenue garnered from the tourism industry was reportedly €3.2 billion, with a total of 4 million tourists.

Top source markets include Greece, Israeli settlers, Russia, the United Kingdom and Germany.



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3rd
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“In our effort to regain the desired freedom, we will extend both our right and our left hands to receive help from both East and West.”

Archbishop Makarios, during a speech at Fanairomenis Church, Nicosia, 27/06/1953

Upon its independence, the Republic became one of the founder members of the **Non-Aligned movement, in 1961.**

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Cyprus's foreign policy at the time: actively pursue support and friendship particularly from Arab and Middle Eastern states to prevent a breakaway

Turkish-Cypriot state.

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It was strategically more important for Cyprus to diplomatically approach nearby Muslim states than any Western power (inc. Greece).



1972:

Cyprus signs an **Association Agreement** with the EEC.

This was done, at least in part, to maintain its strong economic ties with the UK (joined the EEC the same year).

1987:

A protocol is signed between the EEC and the Cyprus with the long-term goal of eliminating all remaining internal tariffs.

This is the result of the sufficient economic success of the 1972 agreement, as well as politically-charged move of solidarity on behalf of the EEC in response to the 1974 invasion.



1990:

The Republic of Cyprus **applies for membership** to the EEC.

The decision to apply was the direct result of the failure of any substantial progress being made on the Cyprus issue (formal breakdown of the bi-communal talks).

1993:

The Republic of Cyprus becomes a possible candidate for the upcoming enlargement, with the condition that it must exit the Non-Alignment Movement.

1994:

The European Council at Corfu confirms the Republic of Cyprus's inclusion in the upcoming enlargement.



1998:

Accession negotiations between the EU and Cyprus begin.

1999:

The European Council at Helsinki determines that accession will not be affected in case there is no resolution to the Cyprus issue.

2002:

The European Council at Copenhagen confirms the **completion of negotiations**.

2003:

The Council of the EU determines that the entirety of Cyprus will enter the EU, but application of its **acquis** will be suspended in areas the RoC does not exercise effective control.



May 1, 2004:

The Republic of Cyprus officially becomes an EU member (along with 9 other countries), bringing the total number of member-states to 25.

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Despite EU laws only being implemented on the government-controlled part of the island, Turkish-Cypriots with RoC documents are eligible to exercise their rights as EU citizens.



2007:

The Republic of Cyprus applies to become a member of the Eurozone.



2008:

The Republic of Cyprus joins the Eurozone and adopts the Euro, abandoning the Cypriot Pound that had been in use since 1879.

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WITHIN THE EU
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The EU that Cyprus wants

Cyprus is in favour of a Europe of sovereign states

- Keen supporter of enlargement, especially in the Western Balkans.
- In favour of a more unified Europe, but often threatens to use its veto power in the context of the CFSP on statements or measures that are perceived as favouring Turkey without proper concessions on the Cyprus issue.
- Being a frontline state, Cyprus frequently expresses the demand for higher burden-sharing among member-states on migration.
- Tax sovereignty strongly desired, as its 12.5% corporate tax rate provides competitive leverage within the EU (EU average: 21.5%).

Factors shaping policy toward the EU

Cyprus's policy toward the EU can be described largely as crisis-driven: shaped by its small size, its proximity to a dominant neighbour and its internal political conflict.

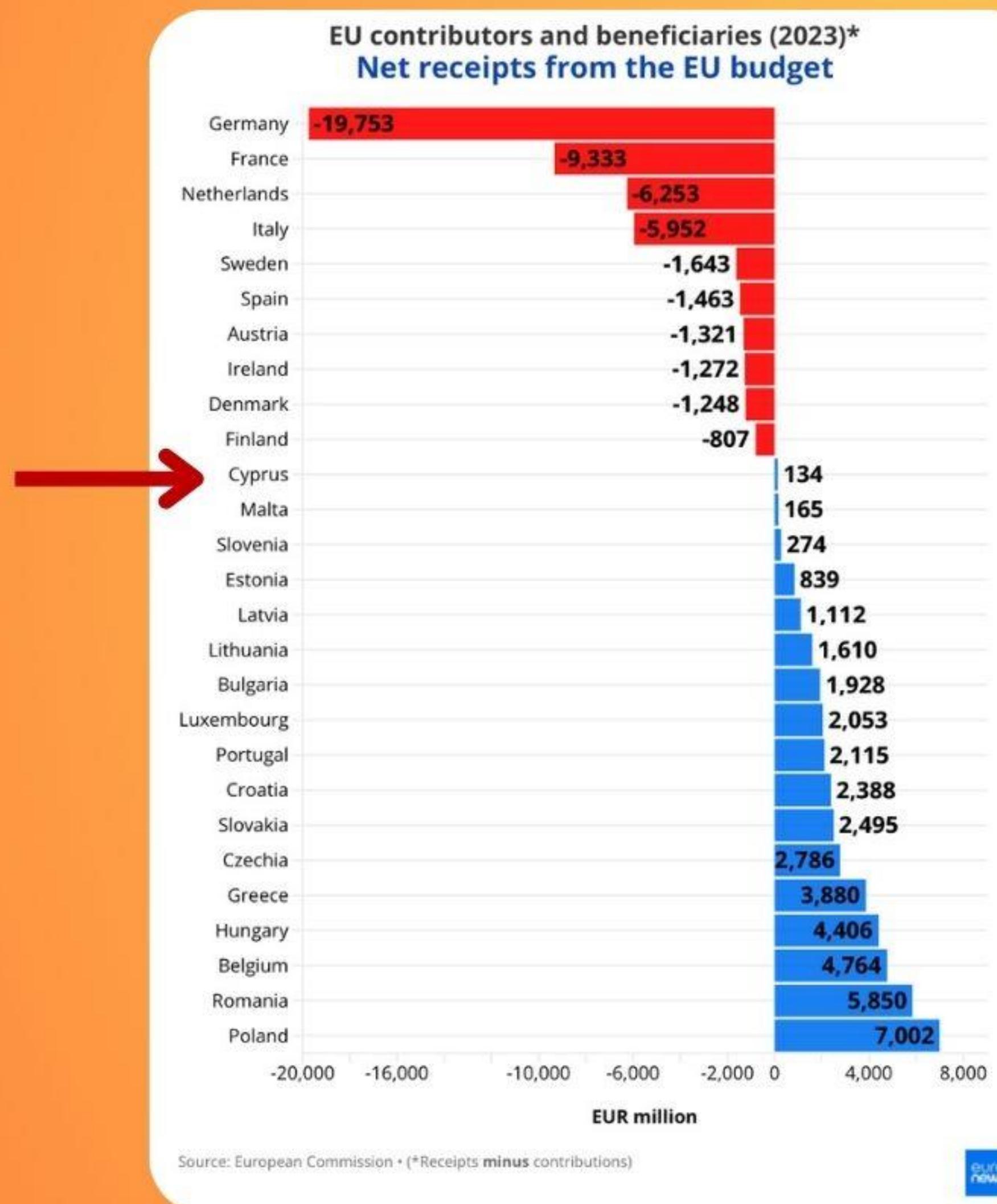
Cyprus is insecure about its sovereignty, so the Union acts as a political, diplomatic and economic shield against Turkey.

By being a member, the Cyprus issue becomes an EU responsibility.

In 2019, the EU imposed sanctions and travel restrictions in response to Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in Cyprus's EEZ: Cyprus frames Turkish actions as violations of EU sovereignty.



EU budget: Net recipient or net contributor?



Cyprus is a net beneficiary of the EU budget, contributing €259 million and receiving €393 million, resulting in a net surplus of €134 million in 2023: the smallest net beneficiary in the EU.

Funding mainly goes to cohesion, agriculture and regional development.

CYPRIOT MEPs IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



Giorgios
Georgiou



S&D



Geadis
Gadi



ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΚΟΣ
ΣΥΝΑΓΕΡΜΟΣ



Loucas
Fourlas



Michalis
Hadjipantela



Costas
Mavrides



INDEPENDENT

Fidias
Panayiotou



Cyprus's upcoming role within the EU

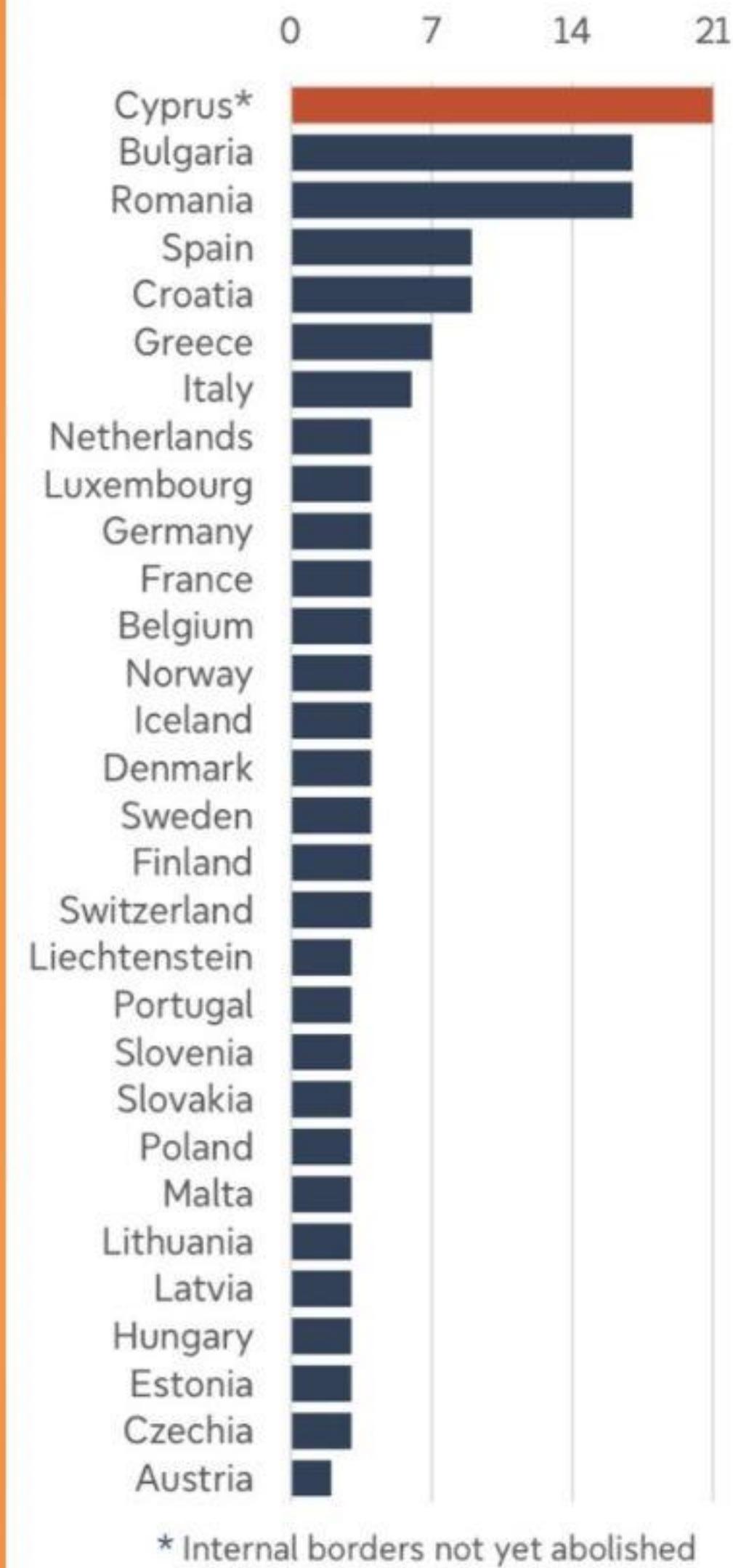


Cyprus will hold presidency of the Council of the European Union for the period January-June, 2026.

One of the European Capitals of Cultures to be designed for 2030 will be in Cyprus (TBC) - along with Leuven (Belgium) and Nikšić (Montenegro).



Figure 4 – Delay between the accession to Schengen and the abolition of checks at internal borders (in years)



Data source: [European Commission](#), 2025.

EU	✓
EUROZONE	✓
SCHENGEN	✗

Cyprus is legally obligated to join the Schengen area by the Act of Accession, and is currently the only remaining member-state whose the evaluation progress is still ongoing.

The main cause of the delay is the Green Line, which the RoC does not recognise as a border, conflicting with Schengen's strict external-border standards.

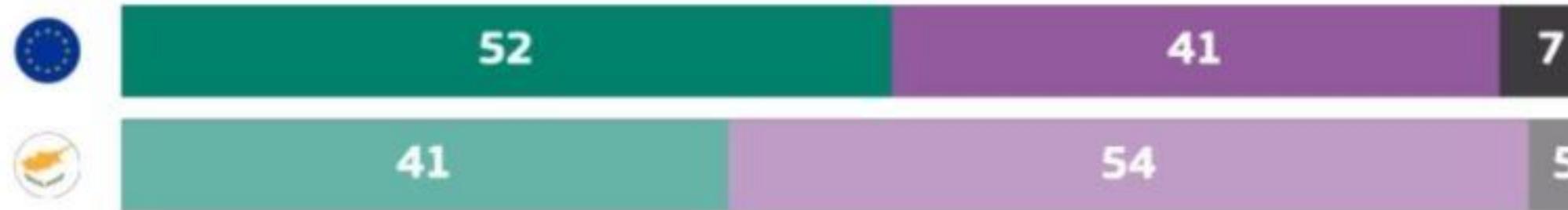
While Cypriot officials initially publicly affirmed the aim of joining Schengen by 2026, this was later re-evaluated as impossible, and thus postponed to 2027.

Public opinion

Standard Eurobarometer, Spring 2025

QA6. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? (%)

The European Union



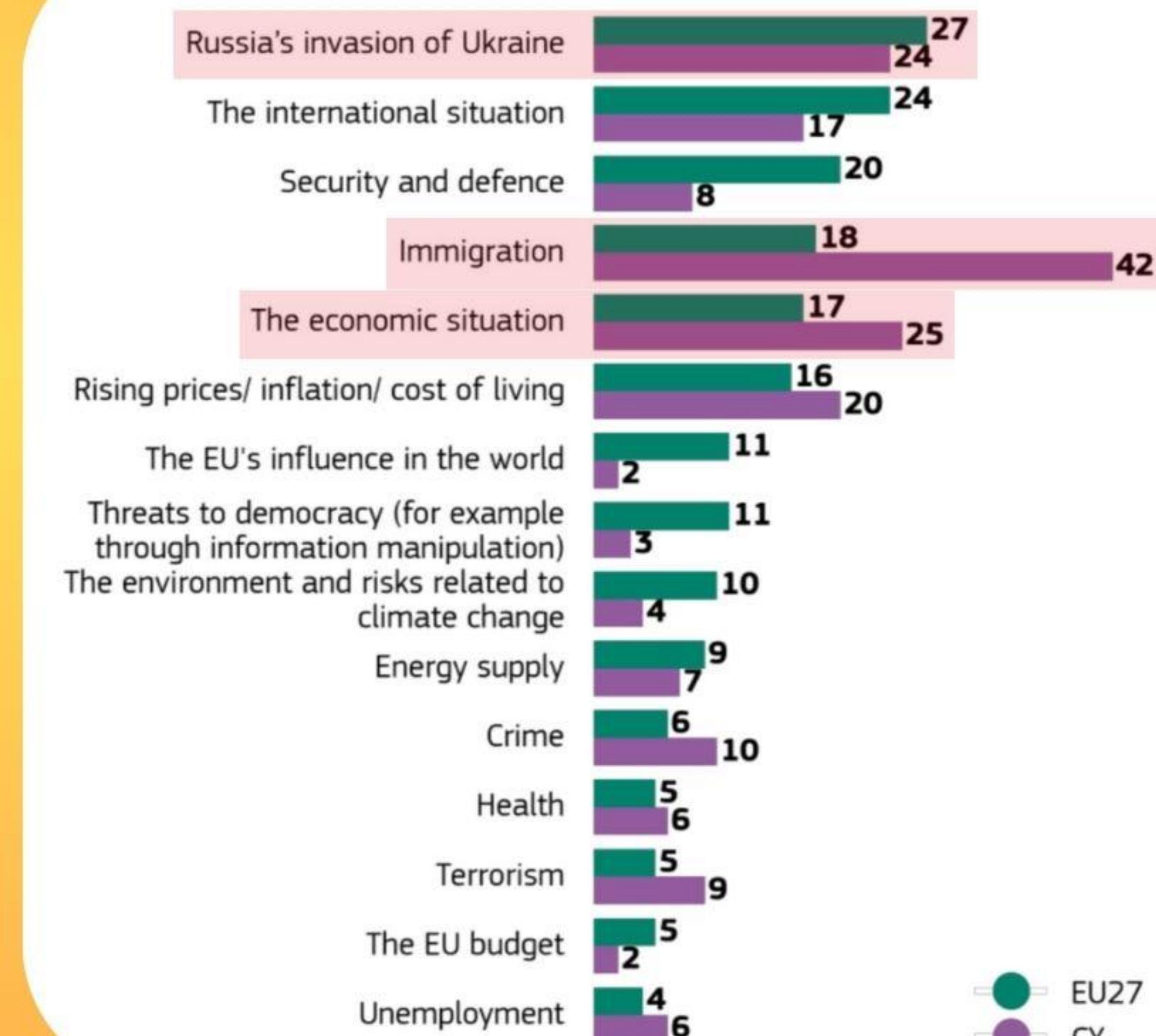
The (NATIONALITY) PARLIAMENT



The (NATIONALITY) Government



QA5. What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (%)



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2012-2013 Cyprus Eurozone Crisis

- The Cypriot banking sector became oversized, loaned too much, and amassed a significant amount of Greek government bonds (esp. after the 2009 Greek crisis).
- Despite the writing already having been on the wall, the government delayed asking for help from the EU for about a year.
- The Greek bond haircut wiped out the bonds held by Cypriot banks, leading to the restructuring of its largest bank (Bank of Cyprus) and the collapse of its second largest (Laiki).
- In an EU precedent, a bail-in was used to manage the situation: all uninsured deposits at the Bank of Cyprus being frozen and converted to equity.

Consequences

- A severe GDP contraction: -6.6%, an unemployment surge: 15.9%.
- Cyprus introduced the Citizenship-by-Investment (CBI) scheme.
- Hard euroscepticism: rejection the EU as a system and the European integration project as a whole (lasted 3 years, never resulted in the endorsement of withdrawl from the EU).

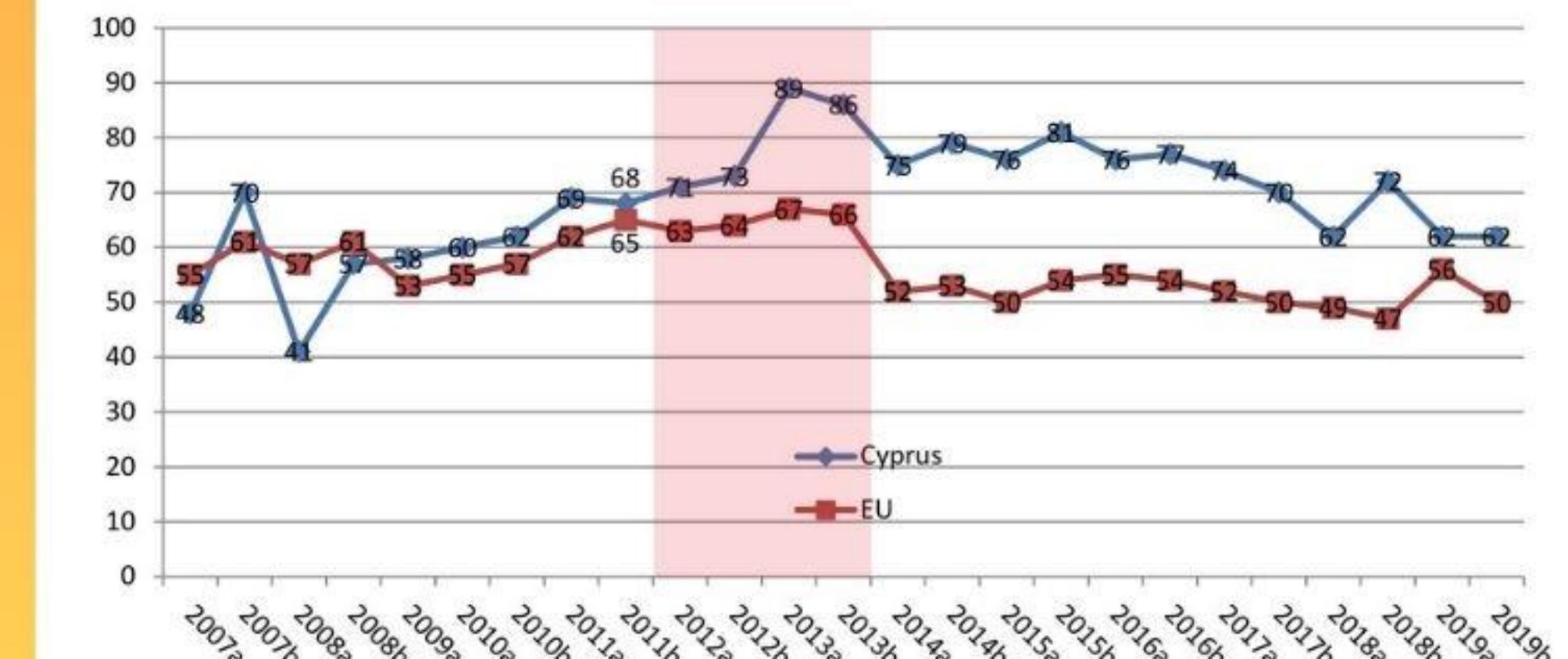


Figure 2. 'My voice doesn't count in the EU': Cyprus and the EU average compared (2007–2019).
Source: Author's elaboration of Eurobarometer data. EB 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92.

Table 1. Levels of trust (%) in political institutions in the Republic of Cyprus 2008–2019).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
European Parliament	65	53	46	50	38	28	32	29	34	44	46	58
European Commission	63	51	44	48	35	21	25	21	28	41	43	49
EU in general	71	59	42	52	32	17	25	17	28	36	41	41

Source: Author's elaboration of Eurobarometer data. Autumn Eurobarometers only. EB 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92.

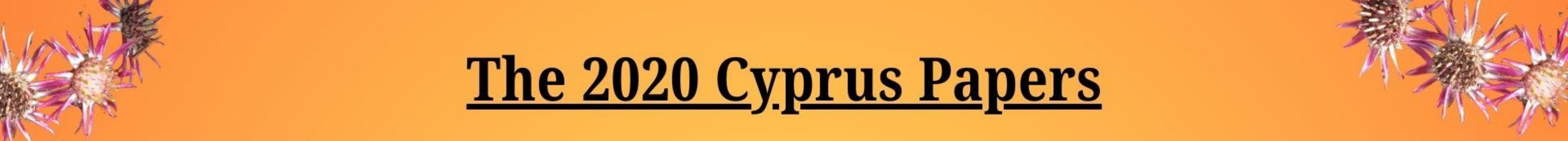




Asylum seekers in Cyprus (2016-present)

Cyprus currently has the highest per-capita asylum claims in the EU.
(1:11, 1 application for every 11 citizens.)

- MENA conflicts displace masses which flee to Cyprus due to it being a crossroad between the developing and the developed world, and the labour market of Cyprus depends on the cheap labour they provide, creating a cycle.
- Irregular crossings from the North via the Green Line add further burden.
- Cyprus was unprepared to managed such an influx, with an overburdened asylum system characterised by slow processing times and a lack of sufficient infrastructure.
- Since then, EU pact reform have helped implement faster processing times, relocation and return schemes, better healthcare and education for migrants, tighter control over the Green Line.



The 2020 Cyprus Papers

On August 23, 2020, Al Jazeera uploaded an article exposing the Cypriot government granting citizenship to thousands of wealthy foreigners through its Citizenship by Investment scheme (CBI), exposing system corruption.

- In October, the European Commission launched infringement proceedings against Cyprus (and Malta) under the pretext of security concerns due to the lack of a genuine link between the individuals approved and the member-state.
- In November, the scheme was abolished, and in the years that followed: hundreds of citizenships were revoked.

In 2024, a Residency-by-Investment (RBI) program in was introduced, entailling permanent residency (not citizenship) and that the applicant must hold the residency for 5-7 years before being eligible to apply.

The Russo-Ukrainian war (2022 -)

After the outbreak, Cyprus was called by the international community to address its long-standing financial links with Russia (reliance on tourism and capital), a demand it responded to by fully aligning with the EU in its support for Ukraine and the adoption of the Sanction Packages.

- Cyprus has become one of the pioneering member-states in strictly enforcing EU measures (asset freezes, airspace closure).
- The government embarked in a successful process of economic diversification by re-orientating its services exports toward MENA countries.
- During a recent visit to Kyiv, president Christodoulides compared the Ukrainian experience to that of Cyprus, noting that Ukrainian accession is a geopolitical necessity at this point.

Cypriot public opinion on Ukraine

Welcoming into the EU people fleeing the war



Providing financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine



Imposing economic sanctions on Russian government, companies and individuals



Granting candidate status as a potential Member of the EU to Ukraine



Financing the purchase and supply of military equipment to Ukraine



Legend:

- Total 'Agree' (Green)
- Don't know (Grey)
- Total 'Disagree' (Purple)

Standard Eurobarometer,
Spring 2025

Assessment

It is an achievement in and of itself that Cyprus, a small, peripheral state, entered the European Union. Its accession preceded any resolution to its internal conflict.

Regardless of the interests the EU had when accepting its application, it provided the Republic with a framework and support network through which it has been, and continues to be, able to grow and develop. It was through the Union that many of its internal issues were brought to light - improper monetary management, state corruption, and a lack of sufficient infrastructure, among others.

The fact that Cyprus was able to redirect its economy so successfully following the Russo-Ukrainian war is a testament to the means the Union offers in effective crisis management.

Above all, it has provided Cyprus with a political and diplomatic platform, which it otherwise would lack. It's a noteworthy improvement from the isolation it experienced during the 1960s and 1970s.

ΣΑΣ ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΩ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ ΣΑΣ

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

İLGİNİZ İÇİN TEŞEKKÜRLER



PART 1

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SOURCES



PART 3

ACCESSION

Σύσσωμος ο ελληνικός κυπριακός λαός εξεφρασε χθες δια μίαν ακόμη φοράν τον ακόιμητον αυτοί πόθον να ενωθή μετά της μητρός του Ελλάδος.' (1953, June 29). Πρωτεύουσα. <https://pressarchive.cy/s/EL/item/1133296?q=#?cv=&c=&m=&s=&xywh=3560%2C2893%2C2178%2C1172>

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PART 4

WITHIN THE EU

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