



# CYPRUS



## KEY FACTS

**POPULATION (2019 estimate):**  
1,199,000

**AREA (UN 2006):**  
9,251 sq km

**CAPITAL:**  
Nicosia

**CURRENCY:**  
euro (EUR)

**HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT:**  
President Nicos Anastasiades

**FORM OF GOVERNMENT:**  
republic

**PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:**  
unicameral

**STATE STRUCTURE:**  
unitary

**LANGUAGES:**  
Greek and Turkish (official)

**NATIONAL ELECTIONS:**

**House of Representatives:**  
last: 2016, turnout: 66.7%, next: 2021

**Presidential:**  
last: 2018, turnout: 72%, next: 2023

**WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2016):**  
17.9%

**LOCAL ELECTIONS:**  
last: 2016, turnout: 62.3%, next: 2021

**WOMEN COUNCILLORS (2016):**  
12.6%

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2018:**  
3.1%

## SUMMARY

Cyprus is a democratic republic with a comprehensive system of local government comprising urban municipal councils and rural community councils. Since 1974, following Turkish military intervention, almost 37% of the population of Cyprus is under Turkish occupation. This profile deals with local government in the part of the island under the control of the internationally recognised Government of the Republic of Cyprus. There is no general constitutional provision for local government, although the establishment of five municipalities is mentioned within the constitution. The main governing legislation is the Municipalities Law 1985 and the Communities Law 1999. There are 30 municipal councils and 350 community councils, and a further nine municipal councils and 137 community councils within the occupied area. Following the 2016 local elections, 12.6% of councillors were women. In 2018 local government expenditure was 3.1% of total government expenditure. Both municipal and community councils are empowered to raise revenues through local taxes and fees, and consideration for marginalised groups is factored in to the structure of charges and taxes. There is provision for national government transfers to each local council: both annual grants and grants for specific development projects. Statutory council responsibilities include waste disposal, water supply and public health; additionally all municipal councils are responsible for social services, and larger municipal councils are further responsible for the planning permission process.

### 1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Cyprus is a democratic republic with a unicameral parliament.<sup>111a</sup> The head of state and government is the president, who is directly elected for a maximum of two five-year terms and must gain an absolute majority to be elected. The parliament is known as the House of Representatives and has 80 members, known as deputies. There are 56 seats reserved for Greek Cypriot deputies and 24 seats reserved for Turkish Cypriot deputies, all elected by universal suffrage of citizens over the age of 18. There are also three observer members, one each drawn from the three most populous minority religious communities: Armenian, Roman Catholic and Maronite. Constitutional elections to the House of Representatives must be held on the same day for both Greek and Turkish communities; however, no elections in accordance with the constitution have been held among the Turkish Cypriot community since 1974. The parliament has kept vacant the seats allocated to the Turkish Cypriot community. Following the 2016 national election, 17.9% of deputies were women.<sup>111b</sup> The president

appoints an executive council of 11 ministers who may be drawn from either inside or outside the House of Representatives. Ministers are not allowed to hold any other public office or have any private practice during their term of office.

### 2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### 2.1 Constitutional provisions

There is no general provision or protection for local government within the constitution<sup>112</sup>; however, the establishment of five municipalities in each of the five largest towns is mentioned within the constitution.

#### 2.2 Main legislative texts

- Municipalities Law 1985 – with 70 amendments
- Communities Law 1999 – with 32 amendments.

#### 2.3 Proposed legislative changes

There are 14 proposed legislative changes.

**Table 11.1a Distribution of councils and population**

District	Municipalities	Communities	Population (2011 Census)	Population (2016 est)	Rural % (2016 est)	Population (2020 est)
Nicosia	10	94	326,980	332,200	26.5	332,200
Limassol	6	105	235,330	239,400	23.7	239,400
Larnaca	6	45	143,192	144,900	40.9	144,900
Paphos	4	101	88,276	91,300	29.5	91,300
Famagusta*	4	5	46,629	47,000	100.0	47,000
Kyrenia		Occupied area				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>840,407</b>	<b>854,800</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>864,236</b>

\*Areas administered by the Government of Cyprus  
Source: MOI communication with CLGF and 2011 Census<sup>113a</sup>



## 2.4 National urban policy

Development plans were introduced by the 1972 Town and Country Planning Law. There are two types of plan specified by this law. 'Island Plan' (competence of the Minister of Finance), refers to the national territory and the regional distribution of resources and development opportunities. The 'local plan' refers to major urban areas, areas of exceptional importance or areas undergoing intensive development pressures and rapid physical development. There are also 'area scheme', at the lower end of the hierarchy, which refer to areas of smaller scale and are more detailed and specifically project-oriented. These plans reviewed every five years. The preparation or revision of development plans is a competency of the Minister of the Interior who assigns powers to Cyprus Planning Board. The board's members include representatives of the key sectoral ministries, as well as local authorities, and specialists in urban and regional planning, the environment and development. They are appointed by the Council of Ministers. The process includes public participation in several stages.

## 3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 3.1 Local government within the state

Cyprus is divided into six districts for administrative purposes. There is a comprehensive system of local government which comprises 30 municipal councils in urban areas, including major towns and tourist areas; and 350 community councils in rural areas, which cover 85% of the island's total land area.

### 3.2 Ministerial oversight

The Ministry of the Interior<sup>11.3b</sup> (MOI) is tasked with overseeing local government and formulating and implementing national government policy in relation to urban development, district administration, town planning and housing, land surveying, migration, asylum, civil defence and communication.

### 3.3 Council types

Both rural and urban authorities are single-tier local authorities.

**3.3.1 Municipalities:** There are currently 39 municipalities, nine of which are located within the Turkish occupied area; however, their legal status, including their mayors and councils, is fully maintained.

New municipalities can be established following a referendum in an area or by a group of villages with a population of more than 5,000. Similarly, a municipality may be abolished if the population falls below 4,000 over three consecutive years. Municipalities leaders are called mayors.

**3.3.2 Communities:** There are 350 communities in the area controlled by the government and 137 in the occupied area.

**3.3.3 District councils:** there are currently no district councils.

## 4. ELECTIONS

### 4.1 Recent local elections

The last local elections took place in December 2016, the turnout rate was 62.3%. The next elections, for both municipalities and communities, will be in December 2021.

### 4.2 Voting system

The proportional voting system is used and, as with national elections, voting is compulsory. Councillors stand for election either as members of a coalition or as independent candidates. In Cyprus, six political parties with representation in the House of Representatives also contest local elections. Residents who have been forced to move district due to the occupation are eligible to vote both for the municipal authority in which they are temporarily resident and for the municipal authority of their origin. Mayors are directly elected by the first-past-the-post system with mayoral elections being held at the same time as the council elections. Mayors and councillors serve for a five-year term. A deputy mayor is indirectly elected by secret ballot of all the councillors at the first meeting of the council.

### 4.3 Elected representatives

Councillors serve for a five-year term and must be at least 21 years old to stand for election. The number of councillors in each council varies according to the number of voters in the electoral area, the smallest being eight and the largest 26. Municipalities must have a management committee, which prepares the budget, annual report and annual accounts, and assists and advises the mayor. The council appoints the members of the management committee, comprising not less than one-third and not more than half of the membership of the council, with the mayor and deputy mayor being ex-officio members. Other committees can be set up at the discretion of the council.

These have a consultative rather than an executive role. The membership of these committees is generally drawn from the councillors, though co-option of other people is allowed. Committees are expected to reflect proportionally the different parties, coalitions and independents on the council. Chairpersons must be members of the

management committee. Leaders of communities are called presidents.

### 4.4 Women's representation

Following the 2016 elections, 12.6% (311/2,462) of councillors were women, up from 11.9% in 2011; but down from approximately 19% in 2006. This included 19.2% (92/478) of municipal councillors, up from 5.6% in 2011, and 11.0% (219/1,984) of community councillors, down from 13.2% in 2011. There were 10.2% (4/39) women municipal mayors, up from zero in 2011; while 6.7% (33/486) of community presidents were women, up from 2.9% in 2011.<sup>11.4b</sup>

## 5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### 5.1 Legal requirement and

### 5.2 Implementation

A wide range of formal and informal arrangements and measures are in place to encourage and to facilitate citizen participation in decision-making, including: open meetings of local councils; referendums; websites; right of access to information relating to the environment; public meetings at neighbourhood level; involvement of specialist groups; public consultations; and, meetings with marginalised groups.

### 5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

Local governments are encouraged to develop their own e-government strategy.

## 6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 6.1 National local government associations

There are two national organisations:

**6.1.1 The Union of Cyprus Municipalities'** core functions to contribute to the development of local government autonomy and promote local authorities' interests.<sup>11.6a</sup> The Union acts as the highest body representing the municipalities of Cyprus at a national and international level.

**6.1.2 The Union of Cyprus Communities** is set up to protect and promote its members' powers, interests, rights and privileges and, generally, the independence and self-sufficiency of local authorities.<sup>11.6b</sup> It assists with cooperation and exchange of views between members for the achievement of common goals; to collect data useful to members; to lobby other government and non-government agencies; to assist in securing the powers and resources necessary for the development and expansion of local self-government; and, to participate in international bodies of local self-government and in local and international conferences.

**Table 11.1b Women councillors and mayors following the last three local elections**

Election	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
All councillors	na	-19	380	11.9	311	12.6
<b>All female councillors</b>	na	-19	380	11.9	311	12.6
All male councillors	na	~81	2,814	88.1	2,151	87.4
<b>Total councillors</b>	na	100.0	3,194	100.0	2,462	100.0
Municipal councillors	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Female municipal councillors</b>	na	na	30	5.6	92	19.2
Male municipal councillors	na	na	504	94.4	386	80.8
<b>Total municipal councillors</b>	na	100.0	534	100.0	478	100.0
Community councillors	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Female community councillors</b>	na	na	350	13.2	219	11.0
Male community councillors	na	na	2,310	86.8	1,765	89.0
<b>Total community councillors</b>	na	100.0	2,660	100.0	1,984	100.0
Municipal mayors	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Female municipal mayors</b>	na	na	0	0	4	10.3
Male municipal mayors	na	na	30	100.0	35	89.7
<b>Total municipal mayors</b>	na	100.0	30	100.0	39	100.0
Community presidents	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Female community presidents</b>	na	na	10	2.9	33	6.7
Male community presidents	na	na	340	97.1	453	93.3
<b>Total community presidents</b>	na	100.0	350	100.0	486	100.0

Source: MOI communication with CLGF

## 7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

At the national level, intergovernmental relations are often channelled through the Union of Cyprus Municipalities and the Union of Cyprus Communities. At the district level, the district officer – a civil servant who is head of the district office and accountable to the Minister of the Interior – coordinates government activities in the area.

## 8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

### 8.1 Municipalities

The annual budgets of municipal councils are approved by the Council of Ministers. Municipalities must keep proper books of accounts, and financial statements must be prepared and submitted for audit by the end of the financial year. The audited accounts are submitted by the auditor general, together with an audit report to the municipal council, the House of

Representatives and the minister, who sees that they are published in the official gazette. The auditor general has the right to request any information or explanations from any council member or employee and has the right of access to any document necessary to conduct an audit.

### 8.2 Communities

The annual budgets of community councils are approved by the district officer. Communities must keep proper accounts and prepare financial statements by the end of the financial year. The financial statements are submitted to the auditor general. The audited financial statements and audit report are then submitted to the district officer. Additionally, the auditor general may conduct special reviews or any other audit deemed necessary.

**Table 11.2a Aggregate income and expenditure for local government 2016**

Revenue	EUR m	Expenditure	EUR m
Centre-local transfers	na	Administration	na
Locally raised revenue	na	Services	na
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>309.9</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>283.9</b>

Source: MOI communication with CLGF

## 9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

### 9.1 Local government expenditure

In 2018 local government expenditure was 3.1% of total government expenditure, down from 3.9% in 2016, 4.3% in 2012 and 4.8% in 2010. See table 11.2b.

### 9.2 Locally raised revenue

Municipal councils obtain their revenues from municipal taxes, licence fees, permits, fines and rents. Community councils derive their revenues from taxes, fees and other revenues. Marginalised groups are considered in the structure of charges and taxes.

### 9.3 Transfers

The government subsidises each local council with a yearly grant proposed by the Council of Ministers and approved by the House of Representatives. In addition to these annual state grants, the government contributes special grants for development projects. Such grants vary according to the project and the financial situation of the council, and are approved on a project-by-project basis with financial assistance ranging from 70-100% of the total cost. The whole of the annual grant to the municipalities and approximately 75% of that to the communities is directly allocated, then distributed further to individual local units based on an agreed formula. Expenditure incurred should be included in the approved annual budgets.

### 9.4 Loans

With the approval of the Council of Ministers and on such terms as prescribed by it, municipalities may borrow so as to carry out work for public utility. The same is true for communities, with approval from the district officer and the Minister of Finance.

### 9.5 Local authority staff

Mayors are given an annual stipend that is determined by the council and approved by the Council of Ministers.

The stipends of elected officials (mayors, municipal councillors, community presidents) and the salaries of officers are paid through a local authority's budget. Municipalities recruit staff directly under conditions specified in their approved regulations. National government provides administrative and technical assistance to most communities through the local district office.



Table 11.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2008-2019

	2008 actual	2010 actual	2012 actual	2014 actual	2016 actual	2017 actual	2018 actual	2019 budget
Total government expenditure	7,260.37	8,067.19	8,127.20	8,521.26	7,087.23	7,294.2	9,215.3	na
Total local government expenditure	323.11	385.99	350.81	281.69	273.29	282.6	283.9	na
<b>Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>na</b>

Source: GDP, local and national government expenditure figures, Eurostat 2017<sup>11.9</sup>

## 10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

### 10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility

Both municipalities and communities have responsibility for the following services:

- waste management
- water supply
- sewers and drainage systems
- street maintenance
- public health
- slaughterhouses
- theatre regulation and control.

Municipalities have additional responsibilities for social services and building permits, with larger municipalities overseeing planning/development permission, and domestic waste collection and treatment. Municipalities also have discretionary powers for municipal markets and cultural and leisure facilities, and the power to issue permits for the construction and alteration of buildings. Coastal authorities can issue licences for beach sports, activities and facilities. Planning responsibilities are shared with the Department of Town Planning and Housing. Water supply, sewerage and drainage are constructed and managed through specialised bodies whose management boards are made up of representatives of local authorities.

### 10.2 ICT use in service delivery

ICT is widely used by local authorities.

### 10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In July 2017, the Agriculture Minister addressed the UN High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development saying that Cyprus had achieved great progress in the implementation of the goals set. Supplying excellent quality of water to consumers is one of the goals which is also directly linked to local administration.<sup>11.10</sup>

#### REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- 11.1a Cyprus government portal [www.cyprus.gov.cy](http://www.cyprus.gov.cy)
- 11.1b Women in national parliaments. Inter-Parliamentary Union [www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)
- 11.2 Constitution of Cyprus [www.presidency.gov.cy/presidency/presidency.nsf/all/1003AEDD83EED9C7C225756F0023C6AD/\\$file/CY\\_Constitution.pdf](http://www.presidency.gov.cy/presidency/presidency.nsf/all/1003AEDD83EED9C7C225756F0023C6AD/$file/CY_Constitution.pdf)
- 11.3a 2011 Population Census [www.cystat.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/populationcondition\\_22main\\_en/populationcondition\\_22main\\_en?OpenForm&sub=2&sel=2](http://www.cystat.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/populationcondition_22main_en/populationcondition_22main_en?OpenForm&sub=2&sel=2)
- 11.3b Ministry of the Interior [www.moi.gov.cy](http://www.moi.gov.cy)
- 11.4a Elections, Ministry of the Interior [www.moi.gov.cy/moi/moi.nsf/page16\\_gr/page16\\_gr?OpenDocument](http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/moi.nsf/page16_gr/page16_gr?OpenDocument)
- 11.4b Gender equality and the empowerment of women in Cyprus, presentation by the law commissioner 2005 [www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/all/B700255109A13DBCC22574E8002C6F5A/\\$file/The Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Cyprus.pdf](http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/all/B700255109A13DBCC22574E8002C6F5A/$file/The%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20the%20Empowerment%20of%20Women%20in%20Cyprus.pdf)
- 11.5 No reference for this section
- 11.6a Union of Cyprus Municipalities [www.ucm.org.cy](http://www.ucm.org.cy)
- 11.6b Union of Cyprus Communities [www.ekk.org.cy](http://www.ekk.org.cy)
- 11.7 No reference for this section
- 11.8 No reference for this section
- 11.9 Based on figures provided by Eurostat for 2008-16, total general government expenditure as a percentage of GDP and total local government expenditure as a percentage of GDP:  
Local and national government expenditure <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tec00023&language=en>  
Annual GDP figures <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/national-accounts/data/database>
- 11.10 Cyprus Voluntary National Review 2017 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/cyprusd>
- 11.11a World Population Prospects 2019 [https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019\\_DataBooklet.pdf](https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_DataBooklet.pdf)
- 11.11b UN statistics surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf>
- 11.11c Commonwealth Local Government knowledge hub [www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub](http://www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub)
- 11.11d National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government, Greece [www.ekdd.gr](http://www.ekdd.gr)
- 11.11e UNDP HDR Cyprus country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CYP>

**Annex 11a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Cyprus**

Services	Delivering authority			Remarks
	National government	Municipalities	Communities	
<b>GENERAL ADMINISTRATION</b>				
Police	■			Local authorities may appoint traffic police
Fire protection	■			
Civil protection	■			
Criminal justice	■			
Civil status register	■			
Statistical office	■			
Electoral register	■			
<b>EDUCATION</b>				
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)	■			
Primary	■			
Secondary	■			
Vocational and technical	■			
Higher education	■			
Adult education	■			
<b>SOCIAL WELFARE</b>				
Family welfare services	■			Local authorities may establish and run nursing homes
Welfare homes	■	■	■	
Social security	■			
<b>PUBLIC HEALTH</b>				
Primary care				
Hospitals	■			
Health protection	■	■	■	
<b>HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING</b>				
Housing	■			
Town planning	■	■	■	
Regional planning	■			
<b>TRANSPORT</b>				
Roads	■	■	■	
Transport	■	■		
Urban roads	■			
Urban rail				
Ports	■			
Airports	■			
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION</b>				
Water and sanitation	■	■	■	
Refuse collection and disposal		■	■	
Cemeteries and crematoria		■	■	
Slaughterhouses		■	■	
Environmental protection		■	■	
Consumer protection	■			
<b>CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS</b>				
Theatres and concerts	■	■	■	
Museums and libraries	■	■	■	
Parks and open spaces	■	■	■	
Sports and leisure facilities	■	■	■	
Religious facilities		■	■	
<b>UTILITIES</b>				
Gas services	■			
District heating	■			
Water supply	■	■	■	
Electricity	■			
<b>ECONOMIC</b>				
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	■			
Local economic development/promotion	■			
Trade and industry	■			
Tourism	■	■		

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service