

INDIA-CYPRUS BILATERAL RELATIONS

Republic of India and Republic of Cyprus (RoC) established diplomatic ties on 10 February 1962. Bilateral relations between both countries have been traditionally very close and friendly. India had supported the freedom struggle of RoC and thereafter has consistently endorsed the solution of the Cyprus issue, based on UNSC resolutions, international law and the EU acquis. RoC supported India on crucial issues including India's election to UNSC, the India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement, the NSG and the IAEA. RoC also supported India post-Shakti series of nuclear tests and on the issues of Pulwama terrorist attack.

2. There have been several goodwill gestures between the two countries, marking their special regard and gratitude for each other. India has named an avenue in New Delhi in honour of Archbishop Makarios, the first President of RoC. RoC issued two postal stamps on the occasion of Centenary Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 1970. A bust of Mahatma Gandhi was installed in the garden of the Parliament of RoC in July 1972 and the avenue in the front of bust was named as "Jawaharlal Nehru Avenue" in 1983. On the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary, RoC issued a commemorative stamp on 10 September 2019.

3. India had three force commanders serving in RoC since the establishment of the UN Peace Keeping Force in RoC (UNFICYP) in 1964 – Lieutenant General PS Gyani, General KS Thimayya and Major General Diwan Prem Chand. General KS Thimayya, who died in harness in 1965, was honored by a commemorative stamp and naming an avenue in RoC in his memory in 1966. At present, one officer from Indian Army is serving in the UNFICYP.

High-Level Visits: India-Cyprus political relations have been strengthened through a series of high-level visits. Some of high-level visit are as follows:

India to Republic of Cyprus:

- Shri Shantanu Thakur, MoS (MoPSW) (08-11 October 2023);
- Dr. S. Jaishankar, EAM (29-31 December 2022);
- Shri Ram Nath Kovind, President of India (2-4 September 2018);
- Shri M.J. Akbar, MoS (EA) (30 March- 01 April 2017);
- Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, MP attended the 45th Regional Conference of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (24-27 May 2015);
- Smt. Preneet Kaur, MoS (EA) (10-13 April 2013);
- Shri Pranab Mukherjee, EAM (24-26 May 2007);
- Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (October 2002);
- Dr. Najma Heptullah, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and Shri S. Malikarjunaiah, Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha (1996);
- Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (September 1983);
- President R. Venkataraman (September 1988);
- President V.V. Giri (July 1972).

Republic of Cyprus to India:

- Mr. Nicos Nouris, Interior Minister to attend 3rd Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism “No Money for Terror” in New Delhi (November 2022);
- Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President (24-29 April 2017);
- Mr. Giorgios Lakkotrypīs, Minister of Energy, Commerce, Industry & Tourism to participate in Petrotech and India-Europe 29 Business Forum (December 2016);
- Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides, Foreign Minister to attend ASEM FFM 11 (10-12 November 2013);
- Mr. Sofoclis Albert Aletraris, Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environment to attend COP-11 to CBD in Hyderabad (October 2012);
- Mr. Markos Kyprianou, Foreign Minister of RoC (17-19 April 2011);

- Mr. Antonis Paschalides, Minister of Commerce, Industry & Tourism (October 2010);
- Mr. A. Ghalanos, President of the House of Representatives of RoC (1995).

High-Level Engagements

4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with former President Nicos Anastasiades during the UNGA in New York on 26 September 2019 and earlier at CHOGM in London on 20 April 2018. External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar had a virtual meeting with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of RoC, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides on 16 February 2021. Both sides reviewed and appreciated the upward trajectory in the bilateral ties witnessed in the recent years and agreed to maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges, economic cooperation and people to people ties. EAM had a bilateral meeting with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of RoC, Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides during the sidelines of CHOGM 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda on 23 June 2022 and at the sidelines of 77th UNGA in New York on 24 September 2022. Mr. Nicos Nouris, Interior Minister of RoC visited India to attend 3rd Ministerial Conference on Counter Terrorism “No Money for Terror” on 18-19 November 2022. On the sidelines of the conference, Mr. Nicos Nouris had a bilateral meeting with Mr. Nitya Nand Rai, Minister of State for Home Affairs and discussed migration issue during the meeting. EAM had a meeting with Foreign Minister of RoC, Dr. Constantinos Kombos at the sidelines of EU-Indo Pacific Forum in Stockholm (13 May 2023) and reaffirmed the excellent level relations of both countries and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation. Both counterparts also met during the sidelines of 78th United Nations General Assembly High-Level Week in New York (23 September 2023). The discussions centered on enhancing bilateral ties and addressing global matters. EAM discussed the next steps following his visit to RoC in December 2022.

5. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited RoC from 29-31 December 2022. During the visit, he met with Acting President and President of the

House of Representatives (Speaker) of RoC, Ms. Annita Demetriou and the then Foreign Minister of RoC, Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides on 29 December 2022. During the visit, both sides signed an MoU on Defence and Military Cooperation, Declaration of Intent on Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA). Apart from this, RoC also joined the membership of International Solar Alliance during the visit. EAM and President of the House of Representatives jointly released a Commemorative Stamp on the occasion of 75 years of India's Independence and 60 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between Republic of India and Republic of Cyprus. EAM and Foreign Minister of RoC, addressed Economic and Business Forum held in Limassol on 30 December 2022, praising the two countries' relations. EAM also addressed Indian community at an event in Larnaca on 30 December 2022 and mentioned that the Indian diaspora are important contributors to the economy of RoC.

6. Chief of National Guard of RoC, Lieutenant General Dimokritos Zervakis and Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of India, General Anil Chauhan, engaged in a cordial telephone conversation on 14 August 2023, addressing Eastern Mediterranean geostrategic challenges and shared interests. They emphasized the significance of the recently signed MoU on Defence Cooperation and explored opportunities for furthering bilateral Defence collaboration. Lt. Gen. Zervakis extended an official invitation for CDS to visit RoC during the conversation.

7. Recently, Shri Shantanu Thakur, Minister of State (MoS) for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways of India, visited RoC from 08-11 October 2023 to attend the "Cyprus Maritime 2023 Conference" in Limassol, organized by the Deputy Shipping Ministry of RoC. The Maritime Service Exhibition was inaugurated by the President of RoC, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, along with the MoS and the Shipping Deputy Minister of RoC, Ms. Marina Hadjimanolis. MoS had a bilateral meeting with Deputy Minister Hadjimanolis during the sidelines of the Conference and they discussed ways to further strengthen the bilateral relations in the shipping sector. MoS also attended an Indian Shipping Community

event as the Guest of Honour, organized by the High Commission of India. MoS interacted with members of the Indian Community, Indian professionals, eminent persons from the shipping sector and appreciated their contributions to strengthening business, cultural, and people-to-people ties between India and RoC.

8. **Institutional Mechanism:**

Foreign Office Consultations: In March 2001, the two sides signed a protocol institutionalizing Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) on an annual basis, at the level of Secretary, alternately in Nicosia and New Delhi. Three rounds have been held (2001- Nicosia, 2004 and 2009 in New Delhi). Interim talks at the level of Joint Secretary (Central Europe), MEA and Political Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, RoC were held on November 11, 2014 in Nicosia. The last (5th) round of Foreign Office Consultations at the level of JS(CE) and Political Director were held virtually on 10 December 2020.

Joint Economic Committee: India and RoC signed an Agreement on Economic, Trade, Scientific and Industrial Co-operation in April 1989, following which the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) was established. The first meeting of the JEC was held in Nicosia in May 1992 and the latest (ninth) session of JEC was held in virtual mode on 21 October 2021.

Joint Working Group (JWG) on Science & Technology: In order to facilitate cooperation in Science & Technology, with the possibility of commercial application in this field, a MoU providing for joint research and development projects and joint ventures in S&T was signed in October 2002. The first meeting of the JWG was held in New Delhi in November 2005.

Cyprus-India Business Association (CIBA): In September 2005, Cyprus-India Business Association (CIBA), was established under the auspices of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce.

9. **Agreements/MOUs signed between India and Cyprus:** Various Agreements/MoUs have been signed between both the countries since establishment of the bilateral relation in 1962. Some of recent signed Agreements/MoUs are as follows:

- MoU on Defense and Military Cooperation (29 December 2022);
- A Framework Agreement for Cyprus' membership in the International Solar Alliance Agreement (29 December 2022);
- Declaration of intent formalizing the start of the process to sign an agreement between the two countries on Migration and Mobility Partnership (29 December 2022);
- MoU on Cooperation in the Areas of Environment (03 September 2018);
- Protocol Amending the Agreement between India and Cyprus relating to Air Services (28 April 2017);
- Revised Agreement on Merchant Shipping (11 February 1997); This was further revised on 28 April 2017;
- Agreement for the Double Taxation Avoidance and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion (13 June 1994). This was further revised on 18 November 2016.
- Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking (25 May 2007) [registered with the UNSG Secretariat in 2008];
- Abolition of Visa Requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official/Service Passports (25 May 2007);
- Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations between India and Cyprus (19 March 2001). The last (5th) round of Foreign Office Consultations at the level of JS(CE) and Political Director were held virtually on 10 December 2020.

10. **Economic Relations:** EAM during his address in the Economic & Business Forum in Limassol, RoC on 30 December 2022 recalled that in June 2021, India reclassified the RoC in Category-1 of Foreign Portfolio

Investors (FPI) in India, noting that RoC is the third non-FATF country to be given this exception. EAM said that in December 2021, Invest India and Invest Cyprus signed an MOU with the intention of enhancing their mutual investments activities and promoting overall business cooperation. EAM said that trade flows have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with trade between the two countries last year amounting to US\$ 214 million. He noted that RoC is the tenth largest FDI investor in India with accumulated investment of almost 12 billion dollars during the last 20 years. EAM also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of stronger economic cooperation, in the health and pharmaceutical sectors and noted that pharmaceuticals, iron and steel ceramic products, electrical machinery are some of the major items of export from India to RoC. An MoU was also signed on 20 April 2023 between Goa Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Limassol Chamber of Commerce & Industry virtually at the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce & Industry to promote and further enhance business and trade relations between India and Republic of Cyprus. The High Commission of India organized a Cyprus-India Working Meeting in collaboration with Best Invest Congress on 29 May 2023, inaugurated by Deputy Minister of Shipping Ms. Marina Hadjimanolis and High Commissioner. The event featured a panel discussion on potential areas for economic cooperation, emphasizing RoC's commitment to enhancing global shipping standing. Deputy Minister Hadjimanolis praised the strong bilateral relations, highlighting the significance of continued collaboration for shared goals in the maritime sector. An MoU between Larnaca Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) and Bangalore Chamber of Industry & Commerce (BCIC) is on its final stage for signing. The area of collaboration under MoU includes commerce, industry, services, education, tourism health and energy.

11. **Bilateral Trade:** Bilateral trade between India and RoC has steadily increased over the recent years. Bilateral trade between the two countries was US\$ 198.05 Million for April 2022 - March 2023. The 1st virtual meeting between Invest India and Invest Cyprus held in

November 2023. Invest Cyprus discussed its plans in Fin-tech space and Fin-tech sector opportunities in India. The topics on ‘International Business Center focus on tech’ and ‘Direct Investments in Strategic projects in Cyprus’ were also discussed. Enhanced bilateral efforts came in December 2021 when an MoU was signed between Invest Cyprus and Invest India, with an intention to increase mutual investment activities and overall business cooperation between the two countries. The figures for the last five years are as follows:

Trade figures

(All figures USD mln)

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (Apr-Feb)*
Cyprus Imports from India	70.65	443.28	90.11	139.85	81.88	83.65
Cyprus Exports to India	393.78	74.43	23.98	74.32	116.17	41.07
Cyprus – India Trade	464.43	517.71	114.09	214.17	198.05	124.72
India – Cyprus Balance of Trade	(-)323.13	368.85	66.13	65.53	(-)34.29	42.58

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

Major items of export from India: Organic Chemicals, Pharmaceutical Products, Fish and Crustaceans, Molluscs and other Aquatic Invertebrates, Iron & Steel, Ceramic products, Electrical Machinery and

Equipment and parts thereof, Sound Recorders and Reproducers, Television Image and parts and accessories of such articles.

Major items of export from RoC: Ships, Boats and Floating Structures, Aluminium and articles thereof, Pulp of Wood or of other Fibrous Cellulosic Material, recovered (waste and scrap) paper or paperboard, Copper and articles thereof, Iron and Steel, Boilers, Machinery and Mechanical Appliances.

FDI: RoC is among the top 10 investors in India with cumulative investments of US\$ 12.64 Billion during April 2000 – March 2023 (DIPP estimates). These investments as FDI equity inflows were in sectors including services, computer and software, auto manufacture, manufacturing industries, real estate, cargo handling, construction, shipping and pharmaceuticals. The revised India-Cyprus DTAA was signed on 18 November 2016 in Nicosia. Subsequently, India rescinded the classification of RoC in the “Notified Jurisdictional Area” from 01 November 2013. The revised agreement provides for source-based taxation for gains.

RoC was classified in Funds as Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) eligible for Category-I license. RoC is one of the three countries, outside FATF (Financial Action Task Force) countries, to obtain such an approval from India. The approval was accorded in June 2021 under the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) (Foreign Portfolio Investors) Regulations, 2019. The classification offers facilitation of Investment funds from RoC for investors and asset managers in the Indian markets. Invest India and Invest Cyprus signed an MoU on 09 December 2021. The MoU aims at strengthening bilateral efforts for increasing mutual investment activities and support business cooperation between India and Cypriot companies.

Investment/Trade events: High Commission of India, Nicosia was the “Country Partner” for *Reflect Festival 2023*, the largest tech event of the region, which was held at Limassol, Cyprus on 20-21 September 2023.

More than 15,000 participants, 350 speakers and 150 startups took part in the Reflect Festival. Mr. Sumeet Jarangal, Director, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry of India and two member team from Invest India participated in Reflect Festival. The event had an India-focused event on 20 September 2023. Ambassadors, Government officials, diplomats from Missions based in Cyprus, members of Cyprus-India Business Association, Invest Cyprus, entrepreneurs, Startups and CEOs of companies from various sectors participated in the event. Panel discussions on “Strengthening Business Relationship : Bharat and Cyprus Forging Ahead” **and** “Starting up in Cyprus and in India” took place.

Reflect Festival-2024 is scheduled to be held on 30-31 May 2024 in Limassol, Cyprus. A 5-member delegation led by JS, DPIIT is participating the event and 13 Indian startups are also participating in Reflect Festival 2024. The overall discussions, presentations and start-up pitches revolve around the topics of Artificial Intelligence, Sustainability and FinTech and these topics will be supported by roundtables, workshops and startup competitions. An India event is also scheduled to be held during the Reflect Festival.

The first-ever webinar of GIFT City in Cyprus was conducted on 22nd February 2024. Stakeholders from across the business community in Cyprus including banking, investments, consulting, shipping and tech joined the webinar. Gujarat International Finance-Tec City (GIFT City) is the central pillar of the tri-city approach, located on the banks of the Sabarmati River between Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. GIFT City is a world-class business district envisaged and built to cater to global and domestic business enterprises and is also aspiring to set an international benchmark for finance and technology hubs worldwide.

Mr. Dhrijesh Kumar Tiwari, Statistical Adviser, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India attended a virtual meeting organized by the European Conference on ‘Gender Budgeting in Europe : Achievements, Challenges, Ways Forward’ on 22 February 2024. The aim of the meeting was to give the opportunity to EU-countries

and other European countries to present the challenges and achievements in relation to gender budgeting in their country; to contribute towards the exchange of information and experiences between the participants; to discuss the methodologies used and how they can be improved and to discuss how they can work closer together in order to achieve the desired objectives.

12. **Cultural Relations:** India and RoC enjoy vibrant cultural relations. There are lot of commonalities between the cultures, values and ethos of both countries. To highlight these aspects, the High Commission regularly organized and celebrated various events, fostering cultural, diplomatic and community engagement. These events included Indian festivals, Photo Exhibitions, Dance/music performances, Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, National Days and International Day of Yoga. Cultural events were organized by the High Commission to commemorate 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi from 2018-20. High Commission had also established many Indian book corners in various institutions across RoC.

13. **Celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM events):** A number of events have been organised to commemorate 75 years of Independence of India commenced from March 2021 under 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' initiative.

14. **Indian community:** There are an estimated over 14,612 Indians living in RoC. The Indian diaspora mainly consists of professionals working primarily in shipping, IT, Fintech, farmhands, domestic workers and students.

15. **COVID-19:** A Charter Flight, in association with Indian associations in RoC, was arranged from Larnaca to Delhi on 15 July 2020 carrying 137 passengers. RoC recognized Covishield and Covaxin and its certificates for travelling purpose. RoC also provided financial contribution of 60,000 Euros during the second wave of Covid-19 to India.

Website: <http://hci.gov.in/nicosia/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/indiaincyprus>

Twitter: HCl_Nicosia

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/>

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