

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, on the issues of Pulwama terrorist attack and Article 370.

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. Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with President Anastasiades during the UNGA in New York on 26 September 2019 and earlier at CHOGM in London on 20 April 2018.

3. External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar had a virtual meeting with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, RoC, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides on 16 February 2021. Both the 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, 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 of India. Both sides discussed migration issue during the meeting. Recently, EAM had a meeting with Foreign Minister of RoC, Dr. Constantinos Kombos at the sidelines of EU-Indo Pacific Forum in Stockholm on 13 May 2023 and reaffirmed the excellent level relations of both countries and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation. Recently, EAM met Minister of Foreign Affairs of RoC (23 September 2023), during the sidelines of 78th United Nations General Assembly High-Level Week in New York. The discussions centered on enhancing bilateral ties and addressing global matters. EAM discussed the next steps following his visit to RoC in December 2022.

4. 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:

5. India-Cyprus political relations have been strengthened through a series of high-level visits. These include the visits of President V.V. Giri (July 1972), President R. Venkataraman (September 1988), Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (September 1983), Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (October 2002). Parliamentary exchanges include visits of the President of the House of Representatives of RoC, Mr. A. Ghalanos in 1995 followed by Dr. Najma Heptullah, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and Shri S. Malikarjunaiah, Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha to RoC in 1996. Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, MP attended the 45th Regional Conference of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region held in RoC (May 2015). President of RoC Nicos Anastasiades visited

India from 24-29 April 2017 followed by the visit of President Ram Nath Kovind to RoC from 2-4 September 2018.

6. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited RoC from 29-31 December 2022. During the visit, he met Acting President and President of the House of Representatives of RoC, H.E. Ms. Annita Demetriou and Foreign Minister of RoC, H.E. 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 (Speaker) 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.

7. EAM and Foreign Minister of RoC, addressed Economic and Business Forum held in Limassol on 30 December 2022, praising the two countries' relations, as 2022 marked 60 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Cyprus.

8. EAM also addressed Indian community at an event in Larnaca on 30 December 2022. He mentioned that the Indian diaspora are important contributors to the economy of RoC.

9. EAM and Foreign Minister of RoC met on the sidelines of the EU-India Pacific Forum at Stockholm and discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between both countries (13 May 2023). The meeting highlighted the importance of diplomatic engagement in promoting bilateral relationship between both countries, especially those with shared histories and interest.

10. Recently, 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 Military

Cooperation and explored opportunities for furthering bilateral military collaboration. Lt. Gen. Zervakis extended an official invitation for CDS to visit RoC during the conversation.

11. Ministerial Visits:

India:

- Dr. S. Jaishankar, EAM (29-31 December 2022);
- Shri M.J. Akbar, MoS (MEA) (30 March- 01 April 2017);
- Smt Preneet Kaur, MoS (MEA) (April 2013);
- Shri Pranab Mukherjee, EAM (May 2007)

Republic of Cyprus:

- Mr. Nicos Nouris, Interior Minister to attend 3rd Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism “No Money for Terror” in New Delhi (November 2022)
- Mr. Giorgios Lakkotrypīs, Minister of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism to participate in Petrotech and India-Europe 29 Business Forum (December 2016);
- Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides, Foreign Minister to attend ASEM FFM 11 (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 (April 2011);
- Mr. Antonis Paschalides, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (October 2010);

12. 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 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: Republic of India and RoC signed an Agreement on Economic, Trade, Scientific and Industrial Cooperation 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 (S&T): 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.

13. **Agreements/MOUs signed between India and Cyprus:**

- 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).
- Agreement for Economic, Trade, Scientific, Technical and Industrial Cooperation (13 April 1989). 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.

- Agreement for the Double Taxation Avoidance and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion (13 June 1994). This was further revised on 18 November 2016.
- Agreement on Merchant Shipping (11 February 1997)
The agreement had been superseded by new agreement executed on 28 April 2017.
- Abolition of Visa Requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official/Service Passports (May 2007);
- Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking (25 May 2007) [registered with the UNSG Secretariat in 2008].
- Extradition Treaty.
RoC has named India as a designated Commonwealth State for the purpose of extradition proceedings (July 2021), whereby, extradition requests can now be carried out between RoC and India.

14. **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 today 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. Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (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.

15. **Bilateral Trade:** Bilateral trade between Republic of 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. Enhanced bilateral efforts came in December 2021 when a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Invest Cyprus and Invest India, ultimately 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
Cyprus Imports from India	70.65	443.28	90.11	139.85	81.88
Cyprus Exports to India	393.78	74.43	23.98	74.32	116.17
Cyprus - India Trade	464.43	517.71	114.09	214.17	198.05
India - Cyprus Balance of Trade	(-)323.13	368.85	66.13	65.53	(-)34.29

(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” as from the 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 the Central Government of 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 a Memorandum of Understanding on 09 December 2021. The MoU aims at strengthening bilateral efforts for increasing mutual investment activities and support business cooperation between India & Cypriot companies.

16. **Cultural Relations:** Republic of 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 has been organizing various events including Indian festivals, Photo Exhibitions, Dance/music performances in RoC. National Days and International Day of Yoga

are celebrated every year. 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.


17. 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 (<https://hci.gov.in/nicosia/?13230>).

18. Indian community: EAM addressed Indian community at an event in Larnaca, RoC on 30 December 2022. EAM highlighted that the Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accorded highest priority to the diaspora engagement which is evident in diaspora initiatives taken since 2014. EAM said that in the past couple of decades, the Indian diaspora has grown into an energetic and confident community of over 31 million that has given India a presence in many parts of the world. He added that the overseas Indian community is respected for its work culture, discipline, successful integration with local community and for its outstanding contributions in their countries of residence.

The Indian community in RoC comprises of around 14,612 professionals in shipping, IT, Fintech, students, farmhands and domestic workers.

19. COVID-19: A Charter Flight, in association with Indian associations in RoC, was arranged from Larnaca to Delhi to repatriate stranded Indians. The flight departed from RoC on 15 July 2020 carrying 137 passengers. RoC recognized Covishield & 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: HCI_Nicosia

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

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