

INDIA-CYPRUS BILATERAL RELATIONS

India and Cyprus have been traditionally very close and friendly. Diplomatic ties between Cyprus and India were established on 10 February 1962. India had consistently supported the freedom struggle of Cyprus and subsequently Solution of the Cyprus problem, based on UNSC resolutions, international law and the EU acquis. Cyprus has consistently supported India on crucial issues including India's candidature as permanent member of the expanded UNSC, the India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement, within the NSG and the IAEA. In 2006, Cyprus assisted India in evacuation of Indians from Lebanon, under operation *Sukoon*. Cyprus also supported India post-Shakti series of nuclear tests, on the issues of Pulwama terrorist attack and article 370.

There have been several goodwill gestures between the two countries, marking their special regard and gratitude. On the occasion of Centenary Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Cyprus issued two postal stamps in 1970. Mahatma Gandhi's bust, was installed next to the Parliament of Cyprus in July 1972, the only one of a foreign leader and the avenue was named "Jawaharlal Nehru" in 1983. India has also named an avenue in New Delhi in honour of Archbishop Makarios. On the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary, Government of Cyprus issued a commemorative stamp on 10 September 2019. PM Shri Narendra Modi met with President Anastasiades during the UNGA in New York on 26 September 2019 and also at CHOGM in London on 20 April 2018. Following 2014 & 2019 parliamentary elections in India, President Anastasiades, FM Kasoulides and President House of Representatives sent letters of felicitation to PM, EAM and Speaker of Lok Sabha respectively.

India has had three force commanders since the establishment of the UN Peace Keeping Force in Cyprus (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 Cyprus in his memory in 1966. At present, India has six members contingent in the UNPOL comprising of five civilian police officers and one officer from Indian Army.

High Level Visits:

India-Cyprus political relations have been strengthened through a series of high level visits. The most recent high-level visit from Cyprus was that of President Nicos Anastasiades from April 24-29, 2017 followed by the state visit of President Ram Nath Kovind to Cyprus from September 2-4, 2018.

Earlier visits include that of President V.V. Giri (July 1972), President R. Venkataraman (September 1988) to Cyprus. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (September 1983), Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Cyprus (October 2002) and President, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil (October 2009).

Parliamentary exchanges include visits of the President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus, Mr. A. Ghalanos in 1995 followed by Dr. Najma Heptullah, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and Shri S. Malikarjunaiah, Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha to Cyprus in 1996. Two members of the House of Representatives of Cyprus attended the International Parliamentary Conference to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Parliament of India, held in New Delhi in January 2003. More recently, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, MP attended the 45th Regional Conference of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region held in Cyprus (May 2015). A three Member Indian Parliamentary Delegation attended the meeting of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) standing committee on Economic and sustainable development in Cyprus (25-28 June, 2018) wherein Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal, MP (Lok Sabha), leader of delegation met Mr. Demetris Syllouris, the President of the House of Representatives.

Ministerial Visits:

India

- Shri Parshottam Khodabhai Rupala, MoS of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Panchayati Raj (accompanied the President during his visit to Cyprus) 2-4 Sept. 2018.
- Shri M.J. Akbar, MoS(EA) from March 30 to April 1, 2017;
- Smt. Preneet Kaur, MOS (EA) in April 2013;
- Shri Pranab Mukherjee, EAM in May 2007.

Cyprus

- Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cyprus (accompanied the President during his visit to India) (24-29 April 2017);
- Mr. Giorgios Lakkotrypis, Minister for Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism to participate in Petrotech and India Europe 29 Business Forum (December 2016);
- Mr. Marios Demetriades, Minister of Communications and Works, to canvass support for Cypriot candidate for the post of Secretary General of IMO (March 2015);
- Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides, Foreign Minister visited India for the ASEM FFM 11 (November 2013);
- Mr. Sofoclis Albert Aletraris, Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environment to attend the COP-11 to CBD in Hyderabad (October 8-19, 2012);
- Mr. Markos Kyprianou, Foreign Minister of Cyprus paid an official visit from April 17-19, 2011.
- Mr. Antonis Paschalides, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism in October 2010;

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) from the Ministry of External Affairs and Political Director in the Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs were held on November 11, 2014 in Nicosia.

Joint Economic Committee: India and Cyprus 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 last session through video conferencing on 8 June 2016.

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

Agreements/MOUs signed between India and Cyprus:

- **Agreement for Economic, Trade, Scientific, Technical and Industrial Cooperation:** Signed on April 13, 1989;
 - **Cooperation in the field of Agriculture:** A Programme for Cooperation (PoC) in the field of agriculture was signed with Cyprus in 1992;
 - **Agreement for the Double Taxation Avoidance and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion:** Signed on 13 June 1994;
 - **Agreement on Merchant Shipping:** Signed on February 11, 1997;
 - **Air Services Agreement:** Signed on December 18, 2000;
 - **Agreement for the Mutual Promotion & Protection of Investments:** Signed on April 9, 2002;
 - **MoU on Information Technology and Services:** Signed on 8 October 2002;
 - **Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Posts and Telecommunications:** Signed on 8 October 2002;
 - **Agreement for Cooperation in the Field of Public Health and Medical Sciences:** Signed on 8 October 2002;
 - **MoU on Cooperation in the field of S&T:** MoU providing for joint research and development projects and joint ventures was signed on 8 October 2002.
 - **Abolition of Visa Requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official/Service Passports:** Signed in May 2007;
 - **Executive Programme on Cultural, Educational and Scientific Cooperation:** Signed in May 2007;
 - **Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking:** Signed on 25 May, 2007 and registered with the UNSG Secretariat in 2008;
 - **Agreement of Cooperation between School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, JNU, New Delhi and Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Letters, University of Cyprus:** Signed on 6 June, 2014;
 - **Agreement for the Double Taxation Avoidance and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion:** Signed on 18 November, 2016 (revised).
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- **Executive Programme on Culture, Education and Scientific Cooperation (EPCEC) for 2017-2020** – signed on 28 April 2017
- **Merchant Shipping Agreement** – signed on 28 April 2017
- **Work Plan under Programme of Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture for 2017-18** – signed on 28 April 2017
- **Civil Air Services Agreement**– signed on 28 April 2017
- **Cooperation in the area of environment**- signed on 03 Sept. 2018
- **Exchange of information on Money-laundering between FIU of India and MOKAS Cyprus** – signed on 03 Sept. 2018

Economic Relations:

FDI: Cyprus is 8th top investor in India with cumulative investments of US\$ 9.977 bln during April 2000 – September 2019 (DIPP estimates). These investments as FDI equity inflows are 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 Cyprus in the “Notified Jurisdictional Area” as from the 1st of November 2013. The revised agreement provides for source based taxation for gains.

Trade Relations:

Bilateral trade between India and Cyprus has steadily increased over the recent years, however is still below the potential. The figures for the last four years are as follows:

Cyprus Global Trade and Cyprus – India Trade figures
(2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 (Jan-Oct))

(All figures Euro mln)

	2016	2017	2018	2019 (Jan – Oct 2019)
Cyprus Global Imports	5,960	8,041	8,216	4,798
Cyprus Imports from India	58	73,11	58,1	52
Cyprus Global Exports	1,740	1,540	4,897	1,950
Cyprus Exports to India	8	19,22	12,97	12
Cyprus Global Trade	7,700	9,582	13,113	6,748
Cyprus – India Trade	66	92	71	64
Cyprus Balance of Trade	(-) 4,223	(-) 5,132	(-) 4,897	(-) 2,848
India – Cyprus Balance of Trade	50	54	46	40

(Source: Cyprus Statistics Service)

Major items of export from India: Organic Chemicals, Oil Seeds and Oleaginous Fruits, Miscellaneous Grains, Seeds and Fruit, Industrial or Medicinal Plants, Straw and Fodder, Fish and Crustaceans, Molluscs and other Aquatic Invertebrates, Boilers, Machinery and Mechanical Appliances, Electrical Machinery and Equipment and parts thereof, Sound Recorders and Reproducers, Television Image and parts and accessories of such articles, Rubber and articles thereof and Pharmaceutical Products.

Major items of export from Cyprus: 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.

Cultural Relations:

India and Cyprus enjoy vibrant cultural relations. ICCR has deputed a teacher of yoga and Indian culture in this Mission in January 2018. Film festivals, exhibitions, dance/music performances are being regularly organised. Indian book corners have been established in various institutions across Cyprus. International Day of Yoga 2019 was celebrated with yoga sessions in different cities of Cyprus in association with universities and local cultural organisations. To celebrate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, *Indian Vegetarian Food Festival* was organised in October 2019 which was very well attended by the local Cypriot community including the Indian diaspora. Cypriot government also issued commemorative postal stamps on the occasion of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. A musical event of Mahesh Kale, folk music show of Masoom Sharma and classical dance performance of Bala Devi Chandrashekhar were organised in 2019. Free yoga sessions are regularly being held. To promote Hindi, free Hindi classes are being organised every week.

Indian community: The Indian community in Cyprus comprises of around 7250 professionals in shipping, IT, pharma, students, farmhands and domestic workers.

Useful references: **High Commission of India, Nicosia**

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

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

Twitter: **HCI_Nicosia**

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9wVQt4-hZEIhyvquXJN16g>

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