

U.S. Country Commercial Guides



Cyprus 2020

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Doing Business in Cyprus

Market Overview

Cyprus is the eastern-most member of the European Union (EU), situated at the crossroads of three continents – Europe, Africa, and Asia – and thus occupies a strategic place in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The Republic of Cyprus (ROC) eagerly welcomes foreign direct investment (FDI). The ROC is a member of the Eurozone. English is widely spoken and the legal system is based on UK common law. Legal and accounting services for foreign investors are highly developed. With a talented, highly-educated, English-speaking workforce, the ROC offers professional services at competitive prices compared with the EU average. The ROC has a low corporate tax of 12.5 percent, and a liberal investment regime with 65 double taxation treaties, including with the United States. [Invest Cyprus](#), an independent, government-funded entity, aggressively promotes investment in the traditional sectors of shipping, tourism, banking, financial and professional services. Newer sectors for FDI include energy, film production, investment funds, education, research & development, information technology, and regional headquartering. The discovery of significant hydrocarbon deposits in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (and in the surrounding Eastern Mediterranean region) has driven major new FDI by multinational companies in recent years. The ROC is further developing a fairly advanced telecommunications network and infrastructure, and - prior to COVID-19 - had first-rate air connectivity. U.S. products, services, technology, and brands are well-regarded. The World Bank's 2020 *Doing Business* report (<http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>) ranked Cyprus 54th out of 190 countries for ease of doing business. Please visit [Invest Cyprus](#) for further information on the ROC market.

Republic of Cyprus by the Numbers

- Population (ROC): 875,899 (2019)
- Demographics:
 - 0-14 years – 16.1%
 - 15-64 years – 67.8%
 - 65 and over – 16.1%
- GDP: €25.0 billion (2019) €24.0 billion (2018), €23.7 billion (2017), €21.4 billion (2016)
 - Real Growth Rate: 3.1% (2019)
 - Per Capita: \$28,347 (2019)
- Unemployment Rate: 7.1% (2019)
- Cyprus is an import-dependent economy
- No significant non-tariff barriers to U.S. exports
- Exports to the U.S.: \$76.0 million (2019)
- Exports from the U.S.: \$149.4 million (2019)

Market Challenges

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus is the only internationally recognized government on the island, but since 1974 the northern third of Cyprus has been administered by Turkish Cypriots. This area proclaimed itself the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” (“TRNC”) in 1983. The United States does not recognize the “TRNC” as a government, nor does any country other than Turkey. A substantial number of Turkish troops remain in the northern part of the island. A buffer zone, or “green line,” patrolled by the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), separates the two parts. The Republic of Cyprus and the area administered by Turkish Cypriots are addressed separately below.

The continued de facto division of the island's small population is a constraint on economic growth, investment, and trade. Suppliers of imported products in the ROC typically do not directly serve the market in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots and vice versa. The entire island of Cyprus is considered EU territory, but the EU *acquis communautaire* is suspended in the areas administered by Turkish Cypriots and the north is not considered to be within the EU customs area. Internal island trade remains limited despite the 2004 EU Green Line Regulation which allows the movement of certain domestically-produced goods across the Buffer Zone provided they meet EU rule of origin and sanitary/phytosanitary requirements. The Green Line Regulation also codifies movement of people across the Buffer Zone. For more information please see the [European Commission Website](#).

U.S. citizens can travel to the north / Turkish Cypriot area, but as of August 2020 COVID-19 restrictions have made transit between north and south difficult for non-residents. U.S. companies can invest in the north but should be aware of legal complications and risks due to the lack of international recognition, tensions between the two communities, and isolation of the north from the eurozone.

The ROC banking sector is still dealing with the effects of the 2013 ROC financial crisis. Lending remains constrained due to de-leveraging, stricter lending criteria, and a heavy burden of non-performing loans. (27.6 percent at the end of March 2020, second-highest in the EU). After several years of budget surpluses Cyprus' sovereign credit rating has improved but remains at low investment grade (BBB- by both S&P and Fitch) or just below investment grade (Ba2 by Moody's).

ROC governance is generally professional and honest, but often slow. Court cases and public procurement tenders can drag on for years. A recent EU report noted the "nearly complete lack of digitalization" of the justice system. COVID-19 has been the catalyst for more e-governance across all departments, but progress is uneven. Corruption scandals and investigations against government and municipal officials have shaken public confidence in the transparency and accountability of important institutions.

Market Opportunities

U.S. trade and investment are welcome all across the island. Despite delays caused by COVID-19, energy exploration, exploitation, ancillary services, infrastructure construction, trading of natural gas, and alternative energy source generation hold significant promise for U.S. business. The ROC's digital transformation efforts, accelerated by COVID-19 and EU recovery funds, present significant opportunities (please see Leading Opportunities chapter for specific projects). Moreover, U.S. products, technology, brands, and services are often sought after in healthcare, shipping, academia, scientific research and development, financial services, environmental protection technology, and tourism infrastructure development projects. A steadily emerging start-up ecosystem provides an interesting variety of projects to seed investors and needs relatively modest amounts of venture capital and mentoring.

Turkish Cypriot businesses are interested in working with American companies in the fields of agriculture, hospitality, renewable energy, and retail franchising. Significant Turkish aid and investment flows to the "TRNC."

Market Entry Strategy

To navigate the Cypriot market, companies often work through a local partner. The Embassy's Political/Economic Section represents the Department of Commerce's Commercial Service and offers many services aimed at assisting U.S. companies wishing to enter the Cyprus market. A detailed description of these services is available [here](#).

Leading Sectors for U.S. Exports and Investment

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Overview

The ROC wants to position itself as a regional hub for innovation, research, and ICT, serving the entire Eastern Mediterranean and acting as a gateway between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. It is making efforts to improve its ICT and cyber security infrastructure and promote digital transformation reform of both the private and public sectors. To this end, the ROC established a Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Digital Policy (DMRIDP) in February 2020 to coordinate and lead the effort. Prior to that in February 2019, the ROC appointed its

first Chief Scientist and in April 2018 it established the Digital Security Authority (DSA), which focuses on cybersecurity and oversees the National Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT). Overseeing all electronic communications regulations in the ROC is the Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulations (OCECPR). COVID-19 working conditions accelerated digital transformation in the private sector and pushed e-government, e-learning, and e-justice projects to the front line. The ROC pledged to use a large part of the EU Recovery Fund available to Cyprus to implement those projects, and had already assigned close to 300 million dollars of its own national budget to the DMRIDP for related digitalization and e-governance projects. To support the development of start-ups and innovative projects, the ROC established a start-up visa regime, a tax relaxation scheme, and other [incentives](#). Moreover, the major municipalities in the ROC are in the process of implementing smart city applications.

Leading Sub-Sectors and Opportunities

Digital Transformation and Cyber Security:

An impending revision of the ROC's digital strategy and its efforts for an overall digital transformation of the Cyprus market have created a growing need for U.S. software, services, and platforms, as well as for a budding e-commerce market. Increased cyber security breaches led the ROC government to recognize the need for higher security capabilities and consulting services. Digital skills in the local market are limited, offering opportunities for U.S. consulting and training companies.

Provision, Implementation, Maintenance and Operation of an Integrated School Management System and Peripheral Systems (SMS):

With an estimated value of approximately 31 million dollars (26 million Euro), the project calls for the provision, implementation, maintenance, and operation of an integrated school management system and peripheral systems. It will involve the management of schools, teaching personnel, students, and supporting administrative processes of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, and Youth. The SMS includes the supply and installation of hardware and networking equipment, the development and installation of the software, user training, provision of data center hosting services, maintenance, operation and management services for a period of five (5) years renewable per year, with the option to extend the contract for an additional period of five (5) years. The Ministry is expected to release tender documents by October 2020.

E-Learning Project:

The Ministry of Education plans to issue a tender for E-Learning before the end of 2020. The project has an estimated value of close to 12 million dollars (between 10 and 11 million Euro) over five years and will require a complete proposal entailing e-classroom equipment, software for e-learning, infrastructure, help desk for teachers and other users, and maintenance.

Creation of a Government Data Center:

The Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Digital Policy (DMRIDP) will have responsibility over this project, which will require the design and implementation of a model to integrate the Public Service Computer Centers and to implement the Government's Cloud computing.

New Information System for the Customs Department:

In the context of the implementation of the EU Customs Code, which includes a list of electronic customs systems, the ROC will issue a tender for the modernization / simplification of trade procedures and the implementation of uniform procedures in the EU. The Customs Department is housed under the Ministry of Finance.

New Integrated Information System for the Road Transport Department (RTD):

The Integrated Information System will aim to manage information related to the RTD, to provide automation and simplify processes for users of its services, and for citizens, to increase efficiency and productivity, and reduce bureaucracy. The RTD is housed under the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Works.

Land Information System (LIS) for the Department of Land and Surveys:

The Department of Land and Surveys under the Ministry of Interior will replace its existing system with an integrated modern LIS that will consist of a geographic information subsystem (GIS), a cadastral subsystem, a valuation subsystem, and a case monitoring subsystem.

New National Information System for Visas - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA):

The MFA will seek technical support consulting services to implement its new National Visa Information System.

Points of Exchange Automation System for the Postal Services Department:

This project involves the provision of a system that will cover a wide range of postal services offered to the public, through simplification and standardization of services. The Postal Services Department is under the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Works and is regulated by the Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulations (OCECPR).

Web Resources

[Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Digital Policy](#)

[ROC E-Procurement Website](#)

[Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulations](#) (Note: Website is only available in the Greek language).

[Cyprus National Computer Security Incident Response Team \(CSIRT\)](#) (Note: Website is only available in the Greek language)

[Digital Security Authority](#)

Energy

Overview

The Republic of Cyprus (ROC), located at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, offers opportunities for U.S. energy and energy-sector service providers in the areas of consulting, environmental assessment, offshore hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation, supply of natural gas for domestic use, and basing of auxiliary energy services for the wider region. Currently the island is powered almost exclusively by heavy fuel oil and limited renewable energy sources. The government is making efforts to import natural gas as part of its strategy to meet EU Green Deal goals and to avoid significant EU carbon emission penalties. Exploration and exploitation of natural gas deposits in the ROC's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have slowed due to COVID-19 but are expected to continue in 2021. Efforts to monetize confirmed and other recently-discovered natural gas deposits in the ROC's EEZ are ongoing. Some options considered for monetization include a pipeline to Egypt's existing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities and the construction of an onshore LNG export plant in the ROC, assuming licensed operators discover sufficient deposits of natural gas.

In 2014, the Republic of Cyprus ended the state-owned Electricity Authority of Cyprus's (EAC) monopoly on electricity generation and distribution. Stimulating competition remains difficult given the small size of the domestic market, but the Euro-Asia and Euro-Africa electricity interconnectors offer emerging opportunities for regional energy distribution. The Cyprus Energy Regulatory Authority (CERA), in cooperation with the Transmission System Operator (TSO) and other energy stakeholders, is working to alleviate competition constraints in the power generation sector. Although New Market Rules (NMR) are partially implemented already, full implementation is not expected until 2021.

The U.S. Embassy Political/Economic team can assist any company interested in pursuing energy opportunities in the Republic of Cyprus. For more information on the energy landscape, please contact Commercial Specialist [Ms. Ephie-Yvonne Charalambidou](#).

Leading Sub-Sectors and Opportunities

Bunkering Infrastructure Development / Port Facilities:

Partially funded by the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the Poseidon Med II project covers the ROC, Greece, and Italy. Used as a practical roadmap, it aims to promote the adoption of LNG as a safe, environmentally efficient, and viable alternative fuel for shipping. The Cyprus Ports Authority (CPA) is a partner in the project. The ROC must have the bunkering infrastructure for LNG fuel ready by 2025. The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Works is planning the extension of the Vasilikos port to facilitate bunkering and energy companies operating in the region. It is seeking investors for a Finance, Design, Build, Operate, and Transfer project.

Pipeline Construction:

The ROC and Egypt are discussing potential natural gas exports from the ROC's EEZ. Industry experts anticipate a tender for the construction and maintenance of two pipelines -- one to deliver gas to existing LNG facilities in Egypt, most likely Idku, and the other to bring gas onshore to serve the domestic Cypriot market. The Cyprus Hydrocarbons Company (CHC) and the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company (EGAS) have reviewed the technical details to transport natural gas via pipeline from the ROC's Block 12, "Aphrodite" field to Egypt. The ROC and the ROE have already signed the necessary intergovernmental agreements to facilitate the project.

Construction and Development of a National Transmission and Distribution Natural Gas Pipeline Network:

The [Natural Gas Public Company](#) plans to issue a tender for the construction and development of a natural gas onshore distribution network to supply consumers with natural gas once it becomes available in Cyprus. The first phase of the project, with an estimated value of close to 71 million dollars (60 million Euro), will consist of three pipelines that will supply the Electricity Authority of Cyprus's (EAC) three power plants located in Vasilikos, Dhekelia, and Moni. In the future, DEFA will further develop the network to cover

cities and industries and will use the initial pipelines as the backbone. The entire network will have a total length of about 80km. DEFA has already secured a funding commitment from the EU's European Energy Program for Recovery (EEPR) worth approximately 11.8 million dollars (10 million Euro).

Site Remediation:

As part of its efforts to become a tourism hub, the Larnaca municipality issued a decree in January 2014 requiring oil companies operating there to relocate their fuel storage facilities (oil products and Liquid Petroleum Gas), a move which should be completed in 2021. Companies that offer site remediation may find opportunities for new business as a result of this requirement.

Education – Energy Related Degrees from Cypriot Universities in Collaboration with U.S. Universities:

With the discovery of offshore hydrocarbons in the ROC's EEZ and the potential for additional discoveries in the future, many local universities are designing curricula and degree programs in hydrocarbons, petroleum engineering, and related sectors. Cypriot universities are interested in establishing linkages with U.S. universities specialized in these and related fields.

Web Resources

[Natural Gas Public Company \(DEFA\)](#)

[Cyprus Energy Regulatory Authority \(CERA\)](#)

[Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry – Hydrocarbon Services Department](#)

[Cyprus Hydrocarbons Company \(CHC\)](#)

Oil and Gas Exploration and Exploitation

Overview

There is one confirmed gas field in the ROC's EEZ progressing to exploitation, Chevron (formerly Noble Energy)/Shell/Delek consortium's 'Aphrodite' in Block 12, totaling 4.5 trillion cubic feet (tcf). (Chevron acquired Noble Energy in October 2020.) ExxonMobil/Qatar Petroleum announced a sizeable find at the 'Glaucus' site in Block 10 in February 2019. They estimate it holds 5-8 tcf and remain committed to drilling assessment wells to determine its future commercialization potential. The latest exploration efforts by ENI/TOTAL in Block 6 show possible deposits in the range of 6-8 tcf. COVID-19 postponed eight offshore drills – six exploratory and two appraisal – which are expected to resume in the 2nd to 3rd quarters of 2021. Experts expect the ROC will become a natural gas exporter in the near future and that ongoing exploration in the ROC's EEZ will result in additional discoveries of hydrocarbon reserves. For more information on other licensed blocks in the ROC's EEZ for exploration, and details from previous licensing rounds, please visit the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry's [Hydrocarbons Service](#).

Leading Sub-Sectors and Opportunities

Ancillary Services / Drilling Equipment:

With eight anticipated exploratory and appraisal drilling efforts in the pipeline for 2021-2022, U.S. companies offering related ancillary services and drilling equipment in exploration and exploitation of natural gas could find potential opportunities in Cyprus.

Renewable Energy Sources (RES)

Overview

Republic of Cyprus:

The ROC's consumer electricity prices are at the upper end of the EU average. ROC efforts to lower energy costs to consumers include procuring cheaper fuel (e.g. natural gas) to power Vasilikos Power Station (VPS) and the entry of future independent power producers into the market. The ROC also seeks to expand the share of RES in the ROC's energy mix through government supported programs and incentives, such as Net Metering, initiated in 2013, and Net Billing for industry, introduced in 2018. Since January 2017, the ROC has mandated a minimum percentage of primary energy consumed in new buildings to come from RES; for single family homes it is at least 25 percent, for new multi-apartment residential buildings it is three percent, and for non-residential buildings, the minimum is seven percent. Currently, there are more than 17,000 systems installed (without storage capacity), exceeding 65MW in production. Under EU-mandated targets, the ROC was required to increase its total energy consumption drawn from RES to 13 percent by 2020. Cyprus achieved 13.8 percent by the end of 2018. To increase its RES production while stabilizing the grid, the ROC must acquire RES storage capabilities. The Cypriot market mostly favors solar/photovoltaic parks (PV) and general PV installations, biomass-fueled power plants, and the modernization of residential and commercial solar hot water heaters. The ROC also introduced programs for electric vehicles (EV) and has 18 double charging stations throughout the island, which it plans to increase in the near future. The Department of Electromechanical Services is also planning to install 10 fast-charging stations on highways and public roads soon. A pilot scheme is in the works to facilitate fast chargers for home charging of EVs with the use of photovoltaics (PV). The scheme will not exclude storage options and will mandate the use of smart meters. Moreover, the ROC is currently developing its offshore RES strategy through a general framework for offshore activities.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The Turkish Cypriot community passed the "Renewable Energy Resources Law" in 2014, which aims to reduce use of fossil fuels and allow use of alternative energies. The approval and passage of the "law" has drawn the attention of both local businesspeople interested in establishing companies based on RES, as well as household consumers who are interested in using renewable energy. The "Renewable Energy Council" under the "[Ministry of Economy and Energy](#)" (website is in the Turkish language) can provide further information.

Leading Sub-Sectors and opportunities

Renewable Energy Sources (RES)

Power Storage, PV, and Offshore Wind:

The ROC Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry (MECI), and other energy interlocutors are looking into RES storage options. This is a potential opportunity for U.S. companies with storage technology equipment and expertise. Also, U.S. companies with photovoltaic or offshore wind technology and products could find business opportunities with both the government and the private sector.

Web Resources

[Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry \(MECI\), Energy Services Department](#) (Note: Information only available in the Greek language)

Distressed Assets

Overview

At the end of March 2020, Cypriot banks still had NPLs amounting to 27.6 percent of their total loans, compared with 30.5 percent a year earlier, meaning the ROC continues to have the second-highest level of non-performing loans (NPLs) in the EU, after Greece. Since 2013, the two main banks on the island, Bank of Cyprus and Hellenic Bank, have made a lot of progress towards reducing their exposure to NPLs through loan restructuring and securitization, but they still have more work to do. Two U.S. funds (PIMCO and Apollo) have already bought large bundles of distressed loans in Cyprus at a discount, but there is more potential for such deals given the aim of Cypriot banks to reduce their NPLs to less than 10 percent in the near future.

Leading Sub-Sectors and Opportunities

Long-Term Investments

Long-term investors may find opportunities to acquire distressed assets at discount prices either from the two main local banks or from debt-servicing companies, possibly through an e-auction (several relevant websites are listed below). Notably, property prices in the ROC bottomed out in 2014 and have been rising slowly since, making the acquisition of NPLs tied to property an attractive prospect. At present levels, domestic property prices are competitive with other southern European countries, including Portugal, Spain, and Greece, as well as neighboring Israel and Lebanon. Prospective investors must have a legal presence in Cyprus and be vetted by the Central Bank of Cyprus. Non-EU investors interested in acquiring large development projects in the ROC may be able to overcome restrictions concerning property size by establishing a company in the ROC.

Web Resources

[Bank of Cyprus Real Estate Management Unit](#)

[Gordian Holdings](#)

[Altamira Asset Management \(Cyprus\)](#)

[Central Bank's Property Index](#)

[Royal Institution of Charter Surveyors \(RICS\) Cyprus Property Index](#)

Shipping

Overview

The ROC's shipping registry is the third largest flag in Europe and the island is a global leader in ship management. Despite the financial crisis of 2013 and the Turkish embargo on ROC flagged and managed ships calling on Turkish ports, Cyprus shipping offers new and exciting opportunities for United States economic and commercial engagement. The launching of the Deputy Ministry of Shipping as an independent entity under the Presidency in March 2018 reflects the growing importance of shipping to the Cypriot economy.

Leading Sub-Sectors and Opportunities

Products and Services for Shipping:

As a hub for ship management, ship ownership, and vessel chartering services, Cyprus offers much potential for U.S. companies seeking to export shipping-related goods and services, including shipping marine electronics, environmentally-friendly marine engines, ballast water treatment solutions, green technologies, insurance services, crewing services, and marine support services for Cyprus's budding offshore energy sector. Limassol, in particular, the second-largest city on the island, has established itself as a leading ship management center, hosting several dozen global leaders in this sector. U.S. suppliers of any product or service catering to this global industry are well-advised to put Limassol on their marketing radar. The two NGOs that represent most locally-based shipping companies are the [Cyprus Shipping Chamber](#) and the [Cyprus Union of Shipowners](#).

Web Resources

[Shipping Deputy Ministry](#)

[Cyprus Shipping Chamber](#)

[Cyprus Union of Shipowners](#)

Health / Medical

Overview

Republic of Cyprus:

For many years, Cyprus was the only EU member state without universal health coverage, but the ROC finally launched a new National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in April 2019. Despite some initial problems, efforts continue to integrate more private clinics, doctors, and pharmacists into the system. Its first phase of implementation began on June 1, 2019 with the introduction of outpatient care services, while the second phase began on June 1, 2020 with the introduction of inpatient care services. The ROC does not have a domestic medical equipment manufacturing industry and about 90 percent of all medical equipment is imported from EU countries. It does, however, have a large manufacturing industry for generic pharmaceuticals, which welcomes related U.S. products and equipment.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Turkish Cypriot health “authorities” attempt to harmonize health “legislation” with EU standards. They follow World Health Organization international health regulations and have worked with counterparts in the ROC to address global issues such as Ebola and COVID-19.

Leading Sub-Sectors and Opportunities

National Health Insurance Scheme Related Tenders:

In 2019, the ROC passed “The Electronic Health Law of 2019.” It sets the legal framework regulating the procurement of services to create an extensive set of health data registered and stored electronically by all healthcare providers for all citizens. The Ministry of Health is expected to release a related tender in 2022 with an estimated value of approximately 65 million dollars (55 million Euro). For other health related tenders and projects, you may visit [eProcurement](#).

Medical Cannabis Licensing Tender:

In July 2017, the Council of Ministers approved a bill to allow the cultivation and trade of medical cannabis. The ROC will grant three licenses through a tendering process expected at the beginning of 2021.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Medical devices, medical disposables, and medical equipment are developing markets in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots.

Web Resources

Republic of Cyprus

[Ministry of Health](#)

[Health Insurance Organization](#)

[Purchasing and Supply Directorate](#)

[E-Procurement](#)

[Cyprus Medical Devices Competent Authority](#) (Note: Website is only available in the Greek language)

Travel and Tourism

Overview

In the previous three years, the ROC experienced record-setting arrivals reaching four million tourists per year and had similar expectations for 2020. The ROC's tourism sector has suffered significant losses for the year due to COVID-19. Despite the difficult year, many tourism investments went forward and the first Best Western opened on the island. Another project expected to proceed and be ready by 2025 is the first Grand Hyatt. Tourism infrastructure is constantly upgraded and the [Deputy Ministry of Tourism](#) is re-evaluating its tourism strategy and pursuing new markets. Cypriot tourism has earned numerous prestigious awards, including a listing among Global Top 100 Sustainable Destinations. Although primarily a "sun and sea" destination, Cyprus offers more to the discerning tourist, and Cypriot authorities are trying to further enrich the tourist product by encouraging investment in new sectors such as medical, sports, or wellness tourism. Cyprus offers many advantages in this area, including a strategic location, expanding air connectivity, mild Mediterranean climate, existing high-standard hospitals, and clinics with internationally educated doctors, and pervasive use of the English language.

Leading Sub-Sectors and Opportunities

Construction of Greenfield Tourism Projects:

In addition to acquiring existing tourism infrastructure, investors should consider prospects in constructing large, Greenfield tourism projects in the following sub-sectors: seafront tourist developments, theme parks, retirement and rehabilitation centers, athletic tourism projects, medical and wellness tourism, and golf courts combined with residential developments. Non-EU entities interested in constructing large Greenfield development projects in Cyprus must be properly licensed in their country of origin.

Web Resources

[Republic of Cyprus Statistical Service data on tourism](#)

[Association of Large Investment Projects](#)

Agricultural Sector

Overview

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The area administered by Turkish Cypriots has potential for high value horticulture and processed food exports. Most local producers currently lack the knowledge and resources to meet EU sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations to facilitate access to the EU market, creating an opportunity for sophisticated partners. A pipeline from Turkey supplies ample water to the northern areas of Cyprus.

Leading Sub-Sectors and Opportunities

Food processing and Exports

The area administered by Turkish Cypriots sometimes produces surplus citrus, potatoes, and carob that could be processed into finished products for the domestic market or exported abroad. The export of cereals and animal feed (chickens, cows, and goats/sheep) to the area administered by Turkish Cypriots are also possible growth markets for U.S. exporters.

Customs, Regulations and Standards

Trade Barriers

Republic of Cyprus:

As a member of the European Union (EU) since 2004, most trade barriers in the Republic of Cyprus mirror those of other EU members.

Biotechnology

Cyprus has adopted several restrictive biotechnology policies in recent years. For example, Parliament passed a law in 2011 requiring local stores to place all bioengineered products with biotechnology content over 0.9 percent on separate shelves with a sign clearly declaring them as containing genetically modified organisms or "GMOs." Cyprus was the first EU country to introduce such legislation, and therefore the law sets an important precedent, although the European Commission has not raised any objections to it. The practical effect of the law is to discourage store owners from stocking food products with biotech content. In 2012, Parliament passed another law providing "zero tolerance" of biotech content in conventional seeds. Under this legislation, any load of conventional seeds imported into Cyprus cannot contain even a trace of biotech seeds. The law also requires a "Certificate of non-Biotechnology" for each shipment of seeds coming into Cyprus. The government consistently advocates EU member states' right of choice whether to allow growing biotech crops on their soil, and votes against applications to the EU for new bioengineered crops. At the end of 2015, the European Commission approved the ROC's request to exclude the entire ROC territory from cultivating GMO crops.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

For more information on trade barriers, contact the [Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce](#).

Import Tariffs

Republic of Cyprus:

Cyprus has fully adopted the EU's Common Customs Tariff (CCT) for third countries. EU products enjoy zero tariff rates. The Integrated Tariff of the Community, referred to as TARIC (Tarif Intégré de la Communauté), is the integrated Tariff of the EU and it is a multilingual database in which all measures relating to the EU customs tariff, commercial, and agricultural legislation are integrated. Post recommends exporters review the TARIC for their products to determine if a license is required. For more information, please visit the [Cyprus Customs and Excise Department](#) and the [European Commission on TARIC](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Depending on the product, tariff rates tend to be higher in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots than in the ROC. Tariffs are applied based on the origin of the goods and are divided into two categories.: goods from Turkey and EU member states are charged lower rates than goods from all other countries (including the United States).

Import Requirements and Documentation

Republic of Cyprus:

The Department of Customs requires the following documents for clearing products originating from non-EU countries: delivery order for the goods, an invoice, and a packing list. Various other documents according to the nature of each import will be required. A health certificate and a list of ingredients is required for imported food products. Additional information for business and trade is available from the [Customs and Excise Department's website](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Firms wishing to engage in the import business in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots must register either with the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce or with the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Industry. They must also obtain an import permit from the "Department of Trade" in the "Ministry of Economy and Energy." [The Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce](#) can provide more information.

Labeling and Marking Requirements

Republic of Cyprus:

As with other EU countries, food product labels must be in the local language (Greek, in the case of the ROC) and include the product name, ingredients, net contents, name of importer/distributor, and country of origin. For additional information, please contact the [Ministry of Health](#).

Additional references:

- [Directive 2000/13/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of March 20, 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to the labelling, presentation, and advertising of foodstuffs.
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of October 25, 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers.

The "Safety of Consumer Products Law" of 1994 outlines the legal responsibilities of those involved in the production or distribution of consumer products requiring safety warnings (including household appliances, pharmaceuticals, and many other products). One of these responsibilities concerns the proper labeling and packaging of consumer products to render them completely safe to the public. This includes having the necessary safety warnings for consumer products in Greek. The Government has re-doubled efforts for stricter enforcement of the law.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Labeling and marking requirements are much looser in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots than in the ROC and are not yet in line with EU norms. Mandatory labeling in Turkish is not a requirement for imported products if the label is in English or one of the other main European languages. For more information, contact the [Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce](#).

U.S. Export Controls

The United States imposes export controls to protect national security interests and promote foreign policy objectives related to dual-use goods through implementation of the Export Administration Regulations (EAR). The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is comprised of two elements: Export Administration (EA), which is responsible for processing license applications, counseling exporters, and drafting and publishing changes to the [Export Administration Regulations](#); and Export Enforcement (EE), which is responsible for the enforcement of the EAR. BIS works closely with U.S. embassies, foreign governments, industry, and trade associations to ensure that exports from the United States are secure and comply with the EAR. BIS officials conduct site visits, known as End-Use Checks (EUCs), globally with end-users, consignees, and/or other parties to transactions involving items subject to the EAR to verify compliance.

An EUC is an on-site verification of a non-U.S. party to a transaction to determine whether the party is a reliable recipient of U.S. items. EUCs are conducted as part of BIS's licensing process, as well as its compliance program, to determine if items were exported in accordance with a valid BIS authorization or otherwise consistent with the EAR. Specifically, an EUC verifies the *bona fides* of transactions subject to the EAR, to include: confirming the legitimacy and reliability of the end-use and end-user; monitoring compliance with license conditions; and ensuring items are used, re-exported or transferred (in-country) in accordance with the EAR. These checks might be completed prior to the export of items pursuant to a BIS export license in the form of a Pre-License Check (PLC), or following an export from the U.S. during a Post-Shipment Verification (PSV).

BIS officials rely on EUCs to safeguard items subject to the EAR from diversion to unauthorized end-uses/users. The verification of a foreign party's reliability facilitates future trade, including pursuant to BIS license reviews. If BIS is unable to verify the reliability of the company or is prevented from accomplishing an EUC, the company may receive, for example, more regulatory scrutiny during license application reviews or be designated on BIS's Unverified List or Entity List, as applicable.

BIS has developed a list of “[red flags](#)”, or warning signs, and compiled “[Know Your Customer](#)” guidance intended to aid exporters in identifying possible violations of the EAR. Both of these resources are publicly available, and their dissemination to industry members is highly encouraged to help promote EAR compliance.

BIS also provides a variety of training sessions to U.S. exporters throughout the year. These sessions range from one to two-day seminars that focus on the basics of exporting to coverage of more advanced, industry-specific topics. Interested parties can check [list of upcoming seminars and webinars](#) or reference BIS provided [online training](#).

BIS and the EAR regulate transactions involving the export of “dual-use” U.S. goods, services, and technologies. For advice and regulatory requirements, exporters should consult the other U.S. Government agencies which regulate more specialized items. For example, the U.S. Department of State’s Directorate of Defense Trade Controls has authority over defense articles and services, or munitions. A list of other agencies involved in export control can be found on the [BIS website](#) or in Supplement No. 3 to Part 730 of the EAR.

The EAR is available on the [BIS website](#) and on the [e-CFR](#) (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations) and is updated as needed. The [Consolidated Screening List](#) (CSL) is a list of parties for which the United States Government maintains restrictions on certain exports, reexports or transfers of items. The CSL consolidates eleven export screening lists of the Departments of Commerce, State and the Treasury into a single data feed as an aid to industry in conducting electronic screens of parties to regulated transactions. Exporters are encouraged to classify their items prior to export, as well as consult the CSL to determine if any parties to the transaction may be subject to specific license requirements.

Temporary Entry

Republic of Cyprus:

The temporary entry of goods allows for importation without payment of duty and it is extended to motor vehicles, goods for processing or repair prior to their re-exportation, goods for exhibition, and commercial samples, provided they do not change their form or character. The initial temporary entry permit, obtained at the time of importation, is valid for three months and can be extended by application to Customs headquarters. Additional information is available from the [Department of Customs and Excise's website](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The temporary entry of goods allows for importation without payment of duty. For more information, contact the [Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce](#).

Prohibited and Restricted Imports

Republic of Cyprus:

The U.S. government prohibits the export of certain military technology and products to Cyprus, though commercial sales of non-lethal defense articles are permitted as of October 1, 2020. Additionally, the Republic of Cyprus prohibits and restricts the importation of certain items including narcotics, automatic rifles, counterfeit and pirated goods, counterfeit currency, etc. The full list of prohibited items is available [here](#).

Additional information, including a list of import restrictions, is available from the [Department of Customs website](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Importation of the following items is prohibited:

- Rifles and repeating firearms, automatic and semi-automatic, repeating, and semi-repeating shotguns.
- Narcotics.
- Products containing asbestos.
- Counterfeit or false coins or currency notes.

- Importation of agricultural products also grown or produced in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots, such as in-season fresh produce, dairy products (such as milk, yogurt, or halloumi cheese) and poultry are subject to the condition of the market. Turkish Cypriot “authorities” will allow importation of fresh produce not grown domestically or out of season, provided the shipment has a certificate of origin; and
- Domesticated animals may be imported subject to a brief quarantine period.

Customs Regulations

Republic of Cyprus:

Customs duties are regulated by a tariff system based on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding system. Goods are classified according to their description, purpose, and composition, and carry various rates of duty. In addition to tariffs, the following products are subject to steep excise taxes: fuel products, cars and motorcycles, carbonated soft drinks, smoked salmon, caviar, fur clothing, water faucets made of or coated by precious metals, crystal and porcelain products, and imitation cheese (e.g. cheese made of soy substitutes). Notably, excise taxes apply to the above products regardless of origin (i.e. whether they originate from the EU or not, as well as for products made in Cyprus). Additionally, Cyprus imposes a 19 percent value added tax (VAT) on most goods and services, with certain exceptions. Please visit the [Department of Customs website](#) for more.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The harmonized system is also used in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots. Tariffs are not harmonized with the EU’s CCT, however, and they tend to be higher. VAT rates up to 20 percent are imposed on most goods and services in different categories. For more detailed information, please visit the [“Department of Customs”](#) (“Ministry of Finance”). (Note: the website is available in the Turkish language only.)

Standards for Trade

Overview

As an EU member state since 2004, Cyprus abides by European directives and standards. Additionally, several semi-government organizations, such as the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority and the Electricity Authority of Cyprus, generally require companies bidding on tenders to meet applicable International Standards Organization (ISO) standards.

Products tested and certified in the United States to U.S. regulations and standards are likely to have to be retested and re-certified to EU requirements as a result of the EU’s different approach to the protection of the health and safety of consumers and the environment. Where products are not regulated by specific EU technical legislation, they are always subject to the EU’s General Product Safety Directive as well as to possible additional national requirements.

European Union legislation and standards created under the so-called New Approach are harmonized across the Member States and European Economic Area countries to allow for the free flow of goods. New approach laws require the manufacturer to use CE marking.

The concept of the New Approach legislation is slowly disappearing as the [New Legislative Framework](#) (NLF), which entered into force in January 2010, was put in place to serve as a blueprint for existing and future CE marking legislation. Existing legislation has been reviewed to bring them in line with the NLF concepts, which means that, since 2016, new requirements are being addressed and new reference numbers are to be used on declarations of conformity.

While harmonization of EU legislation can facilitate access to the EU Single Market, manufacturers should be aware that regulations (mandatory) and technical standards (voluntary) might also function as barriers to trade if U.S. standards are different from those of the EU.

Standards

Republic of Cyprus:

In 2002, the Republic of Cyprus introduced the Standardization, Accreditation and Technical Information Law (N.156 (I)/2002), assigning standardization activities to the [Cyprus Organization for Standardization](#) (CYS – Note: The website is only available in the Greek language). This law aimed to ensure the impartiality and integrity of the local system, while at the same time harmonizing Cyprus with EU directives. The CYS is an autonomous organization, registered under private law, with the state as the only shareholder. A seven-member board governs it with participation from the government and the private sector. The CYS is a full member of the ISO and the three main European standards organizations.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The Turkish Standards Institute's representative for the area administered by Turkish Cypriots is responsible for standards. No website is available for the representation office. [This](#) is the Institute's main web site. (Note: The website is only available in the Turkish language.) Director Mr. Ahmet Kemal Kiziltan is the representative for the area administered by Turkish Cypriots and can provide additional information on Tel.: +90-392 - 2279639/40.

Testing, inspection and certification

Conformity Assessment is a mandatory step for the manufacturer in the process of complying with specific EU harmonized legislation. The purpose of conformity assessment is to ensure consistency of compliance during all stages, from design to production, and to facilitate acceptance of the final product. EU product legislation gives manufacturers some choice regarding conformity assessment, depending on the level of risk involved in the use of their product. These range from self-certification, type examination and production quality control system, to full quality assurance system. Conformity assessment bodies in individual Member States are listed in the [New Approach Notification and Designated Organizations \(NANDO\)](#).

Publication of technical regulations

The official publication of the Republic of Cyprus is the [Cyprus Government Gazette](#).

Contact Information

Notify U.S.:

Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to notify to the WTO proposed technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures that could affect trade. Notify U.S. (www.nist.gov/notifyus) is a free, web-based e-mail registration service that captures and makes available for review and comment key information on draft regulations and conformity assessment procedures. Users receive customized e-mail alerts when new notifications are added by selected country or countries and industry sector(s) of interest and can also request full texts of regulations. This service and its associated web site are managed and operated by the USA WTO TBT Inquiry Point housed within the National Institute of Standards and Technology, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Republic of Cyprus:

For additional information on standards and labeling, please contact:

Mr. Antonis Ioannou

Acting Director

Consumer Protection Service

[Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry](#)

2 Agapinoros Str.

CY-1421 Nicosia

CYPRUS

Tel.: +357-22-200900

Email: ccps@mcit.gov.cy

Mr. George F. Demetriou

Economic Specialist

[American Embassy Nicosia](#)

Metochiou & Ploutarchou Streets

2407, Engomi Nicosia

CYPRUS

Tel.: +357-22-393361

Email: demetriougf@state.gov

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Mr. Ahmet Kemal Kiziltan Director, north Cyprus representative

[Turkish Standards Institute](#)

Tel.: +90-392-2279639/40

Trade Agreements

Republic of Cyprus:

The Republic of Cyprus Office of the Law Commissioner website lists all bilateral and multilateral treaties signed by the Republic of Cyprus. The Investment Climate Statement offers additional information under Bilateral Investment Treaties. Additionally, the [Department of State's Treaties in Force](#) lists bilateral agreements between the Republic of Cyprus and the United States.

Web Resources

Republic of Cyprus:

[Cyprus Organization for Standardization \(CYS\)](#)

[Cyprus Organization for the Promotion of Quality](#)

[Department of Customs and Excise](#)

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

For information, visit the website of the [Turkish Standards Institution](#). (Note: The website is only available in the Turkish language.)

Licensing Requirements for Professional Services

Republic of Cyprus:

The recognition of skills and qualifications acquired by EU citizens in EU Member States is the responsibility of EU Member States, as per article 165 of the [Treaty on the Functioning of the EU \(TFEU\)](#). Similarly, recognition of skills and qualification earned in third countries is also a national responsibility. However, the European Commission takes initiative to facilitate recognition procedures.

For example:

- Recognition of professional qualifications obtained in one Member State for the purposes of access and pursuit of regulated professions in another Member State is subject to Directive 2005/36.
- Recognition of qualifications for academic purposes in the higher education sector, including school-leaving certificates is subject to the *Lisbon Recognition Convention*. The ENIC-NARIC network provides advice on (cross-border) recognition of these qualifications.

Recognition in other cases is assessed and granted (or denied) by the receiving educational provider or employer. For them to be able to recognize skills and qualifications an understanding of the level, content and quality is needed. The Commission currently explores the possibilities on how to better support these recognition decisions.

The “Your Europe” website maintains a webpage dedicated to help citizens identify what the regulated professions are and what document are needed for their recognition in each Member State. Please see: [Recognition of Professional Qualification](#), and also the European Commission’s guidance on the [Free movement of professionals](#).

Selling US Products and Services

Distribution & Sales Channels

Overview

Republic of Cyprus:

Most imported products and services are handled through agents and distributors. While most agent agreements may not be exclusive, most distributor agreements are. In some cases, a distributor may obtain an agreement to represent a company in both Cyprus and Greece and often in Eastern European countries, as well. There are several major local and European supermarket chains and a few department stores. Most companies in Cyprus are relatively small, family-owned and operated, although there are some notable exceptions. Big companies representing several brands have their own distribution centers based out of industrial areas of the major cities. All products sent to Cyprus are shipped through Limassol port. A recent trend is for foreign investors and companies to enter the market by purchasing existing companies in the ROC.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The market structure in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots is comprised of mostly small, family-owned and operated businesses. Imports are handled by agents and distributors and usually arrive through Turkey. There are several local and Turkish supermarket chains and a few department stores. Most products shipped to the area administered by Turkish Cypriots arrive at Famagusta port via Mersin in Turkey.

Using an Agent or Distributor

Republic of Cyprus:

Several U.S. companies are already represented in Cyprus on an agency/representative basis. Cypriot agents/representatives normally market U.S. products and services under binding agency agreements based on commissions. In Cyprus, a commercial agent must register with the Council of Commercial Agents and receive a license with a registration number. Our Political/Economic Section can provide U.S. companies with assistance in finding and selecting an agent, distributor, or partner through our Gold Key (GKS) or International Partner Search (IPS) services. If you have already selected a partner, before you finalize and sign contracts, our office can prepare a due diligence report on your prospective partner through the International Company Profile (ICP) service. For more extensive assistance, U.S. companies can use our Platinum Key Service (PKS), and for promoting specific products or services to the Cyprus market, the Single Company Promotion (SCP) service. For more details, please see our [list of services](#).

Embassy Nicosia website’s Business Tab, provides a non-exhaustive list of Cypriot companies that wish to do business with the United States, through its “Business Service Providers” (BSP) program. Please view our [BSP program](#) online.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Companies or individuals interested in doing business in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots are advised to engage a local businessperson or entity. For information on how to get in touch with prospective agents or distributors, please contact the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce (TCCC). The [TCCC](#) has a list of members with their respective line of business and contact information.

Establishing an Office

Republic of Cyprus:

To establish a company in Cyprus, please follow the instructions provided in the One-Stop-Shop / Point of Single Contact (OSS/PSC) website. The [OSS/PSC](#) operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry. (Note: Prior to registering your company name, please search through [company names already registered in Cyprus](#).)

The Department of the Registrar of Companies and Official Receiver allows the following forms of legal entities to be registered: Company (Private or Public), Branch Company, General or Limited Partnership, European Company, and Business Name. More information on Legal Forms of Entities and Incorporation Fees are available [here](#). [Contact information for PSC Cyprus](#).

Non-EU residents seeking to establish a company in the ROC must obtain a residence and employment permit from the Ministry of Interior Civil Registry and Migration Department. The procedure and regulations for obtaining a work permit for non-EU nationals is described within the [Point of Single Contact \(PSC\) Cyprus Portal](#).

For a detailed description of PSC Cyprus Portal Services, please see [here](#).

Additional information required for certain sectors and business streams is available in a searchable index of procedures on the [PSC Cyprus Portal](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Foreign and domestic entities, and natural persons are allowed to establish a business in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots. Companies must first apply to the “Company Registry Office” to secure approval for the company name and then submit all required documents to the “Registrar of Companies Office.” For more detailed information, please contact the [Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce](#).

Franchising

Republic of Cyprus:

U.S. franchises, particularly in the food and beverage sector, continue to be highly sought after and successful in Cyprus. U.S. franchise companies present in Cyprus include but are not limited to: McDonalds, Burger King, Starbucks, Coffee Beanery, Arabica Coffee, Pizza Hut, Papa John's Pizza, Domino's Pizza, KFC, Bennigan's, TGI Friday's, Hard Rock Café, Curves, Cinnabon, Cold Stone Creamery, Taco Bell, and Popcorn Girl Las Vegas. Smoothie Factory is the latest U.S. brand to open in the ROC. Besides the U.S. franchises on the island, there are many international franchise brands including Folli Follie, Accessorize, Costa Coffee, Second Cup, Ocean Basket, and Wagamama. Cypriots are brand-conscious shoppers, and consumer spending had picked up again after taking a dip during the 2013 financial crisis. COVID-19 economic conditions have influenced spending in the ROC but the Food and Beverage sector are less affected.

U.S. companies interested in more information about franchise opportunities in Cyprus should contact the Embassy Political/Economic Section at: +357-22-393362 or [email](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Foreign tourists (mainly from Turkey, Europe, and Middle Eastern countries), university students, and brand-conscious local consumers demand recognizable goods imported from abroad. Foreign franchises include Johnny Rockets, GNC Nutrition, Gloria Jean's Coffees, Domino's Pizza, Popeye's, and Sbarro.

Direct Marketing

Republic of Cyprus:

Direct Marketing is a growth industry for the ROC, especially now with the extensive use of social media. Companies approach specific target customers through emails, phone messages, and their social media pages.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

Republic of Cyprus:

Establishing a joint venture has become increasingly common in Cyprus. Four standard formulas for joint ventures are commonly used: corporate joint venture regulated under the Companies Law, contractual joint venture, partnership joint venture regulated under the Partnership Law, and European economic interest groups. In the case of most large government tenders or projects, local companies will seek to partner with foreign companies to prepare and submit bid proposals. Local firms seek partnerships to leverage economies of scale and technical know-how. Foreign partners benefit from having local expertise and established bona fides.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Establishing a joint venture is well regarded and welcomed in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots. Foreign companies interested in participating in a "public" tender in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots are required to engage a local partner. Alternatively, a foreign company can obtain domestic status by establishing a local company. For large "public" tenders, local companies should pair with foreign companies to submit bid proposals.

Express Delivery

UPS, FedEx, and DHL and other express delivery firms operate in the ROC and are widely used by companies for business purposes.

Due Diligence

If a U.S. company has already selected a partner, it is advisable to do sufficient due diligence before finalizing and signing contracts, regardless of the sector of the engagement. Our Political/Economic office can help prepare a due diligence report on the prospective partner through the [International Company Profile \(ICP\) service](#).

e-Commerce

Republic of Cyprus:

The Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry (MECI) created [Business Online](#) to support and help expand e-Commerce as an innovative way of doing business on the island. While in the past individuals and companies were skeptical about using e-Commerce, COVID-19 economic conditions accelerated the use of online services, from supermarkets to online food deliveries, and clothing sales and purchases, among others. It has brought e-Commerce to the forefront and helped Cypriot consumers warm up to the idea faster than anticipated. Household internet access in 2019 was 89.6 percent, compared to 86 percent in 2018. While web-based trade remains relatively small, it is slowly but steadily growing. Most companies now have their own websites, Facebook pages, and increased social media presence. Online banking is more popular, and Cypriots are becoming accustomed to this channel for financial services. The Government is also improving its websites and offers more services and information through the Web, including through its recently-created government gateway portal [Ariadni](#). For the Government's main website please see [here](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

E-commerce is limited but growing. Online banking services are advanced, as competition is fierce from Turkey-based banks. Most "government" offices and "ministries" have a website, and some are starting to offer services mainly in Turkish. However, in general the Turkish Cypriot authorities continue to lag behind the private sector in this regard.

Selling Factors & Techniques

Overview

Selling factors and techniques in Cyprus are the same as in the United States and in other Western European countries.

Trade Promotion and Advertising

Republic of Cyprus:

Besides traditional advertising media like television and radio, direct marketing techniques that involve telephone calls to prospective customers and direct-mail to households have become popular in recent years. Cable and satellite television are expanding their reach and offer another advertising medium. Advertising through the internet and through social media has grown significantly over the past few years as the number of Internet users in Cyprus has increased. Several internet providers specialize in designing web pages.

More traditional advertising channels, such as billboards or the print media, are also used extensively. General and product-specific trade shows take place year-round. During COVID-19, trade show and exhibition organizers in the ROC have reverted to hosting virtual events. Most newspapers are affiliated with particular political parties. The major Greek language newspapers are [Phileleftheros](#), [Politis](#), [Kathimerini](#), [Alithia](#), and [Simerini](#). The major English language newspapers are [In-Cyprus](#), [Cyprus Mail](#), and [Cyprus Financial Mirror](#). There are sector specific magazines like [InBusiness](#) and [Gold](#) that target businesspeople.

There are numerous radio stations and seven broadband television channels: two government-owned, three private, and three paid subscription TV channels. There are also six local TV stations on the island. Digital television is also present in Cyprus. Three companies offer cable digital TV: 1) the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CyTA) through its pre-existing cable network – called MiVision – 2) NV Cable Communications Systems, a strategic collaborator of the Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC), through the EAC's existing fiber optics, and 3) Cablenet. Another option for viewers is NOVA satellite that services both Greece and Cyprus.

There are many [advertising, public relations, and promotion agencies](#) in the ROC. Most of them are partners with major agencies abroad. Our Political/Economic Section can also assist U.S. companies with promotional events through the [Single Company Promotion \(SCP\) service](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

There are a number of advertising agencies in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots. Besides traditional advertising media such as television and radio, direct marketing techniques that involve direct mail to households have been used in recent years. Cable and satellite television are widely available and offer another advertising medium. More traditional advertising channels, such as billboards or the print media, are used extensively as are the Internet and social media.

There are numerous radio stations and seven TV stations. Most newspapers are affiliated with particular political parties. The major Turkish language newspapers are [Kibris](#), [Yeniduzen](#), [Havadis](#), [Gunes](#), [Kibrisli](#), [Demokrat Bakis](#), [Vatan](#), [Avrupa](#), [Halkin Sesi](#), [Cyprus Today](#), [Star Kibris](#), [Kibris Postasi](#), and [Diyalog](#).

Pricing

U.S. exporters should remember that the Cyprus market is small and most orders are for limited quantities. The usual method of transaction is by letter of credit, with 90-day terms.

Sales Service/Customer Support

Republic of Cyprus:

U.S. companies bidding on various projects in Cyprus should bear in mind that a local representative is usually recommended. When evaluating tenders for service and customer support for government projects, governmental and semi-governmental organizations will take into consideration the reliability and reputation of the local agent/representative. Also taken into consideration are after-sales service, maintenance contracts, and the availability of spare parts. Even in direct dealings with Cypriot companies through personal agreements, it is very important to prove that you can help the Cypriot company provide efficient after-sales service and spare parts (where this applies). The Political/Economic Section of the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia can help U.S. firms locate reputable local agents or perform due diligence on local companies and/or businesspeople. Please click [here](#) to review our services.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

For specific information on sales services/customer support, visit “the [Turkish Cypriot Investment Development Agency](#) (YAGA),” or the [Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce](#).

Local Professional Services

Republic of Cyprus:

The island offers a number of professional accounting, financial, consulting, advertising, public relations, and legal services. The services sector is considered one of the major sources of income for Cyprus. There are many professional services associations registered under the [Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#). U.S. companies can also find service providers listed on the Political/Economic Section webpage under [Business Service Provider](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The [Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce](#) (KTTO) can provide a list of professional services available, as well as contact information.

Principal Business Associations

Republic of Cyprus:

U.S. companies with a presence in Cyprus, or who cover the Cyprus market from abroad, may join any of the following associations:

[Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry \(CCCI\)](#): The CCCI is the leading business association, conveying the views of the Greek Cypriot business community to the Executive and Legislative branches of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC). Founded in 1927, it has more than 8,000 corporate members and is affiliated with more than 140 professional associations from the trade, industry, and services sectors. The municipal chambers of Nicosia, Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos, and Famagusta are also members of the CCCI.

[American Chamber of Commerce Cyprus \(AmCham\)](#): AmCham Cyprus promotes business, economic trade, and cultural relations between the ROC and the United States. It advocates for a business-friendly environment in the ROC with a focus on the ease and cost of doing business. A member of the CCCI, and supported by the U.S. Embassy in Cyprus, it represents prominent U.S. companies based in the ROC. AmCham issues position papers on economic and investment issues, organizes business events, and lobbies the government on issues critical to its members.

[Cyprus Employers’ and Industrialists’ Federation \(OEV\)](#): OEV promotes the interests of its members, comprising of the largest employers and industrialists on the island. It advocates for a favorable business environment. It also aims to maintain equilibrium between the business community, trade unions, and other pressure groups in the ROC’s pluralistic decision-making system.

[Cyprus International Businesses Association \(CIBA\)](#): Established in 1992, CIBA is a non-governmental independent association, financed by membership fees only. It represents the interests of international businesses on

the island, as well as their international shareholders, managers, and staff. It lobbies local authorities on issues such as taxation, social insurance, and immigration, particularly in the context of the ROC's EU membership.

Cyprus Shipping Chamber (CSC): The CSC is the trade association of the shipping industry in the ROC. Established in 1989, it is comprised of all major ship owning, ship management, chartering, and shipping related companies based in the ROC. CSC member-companies and the wider shipping sector in Cyprus, collectively employ around 9,000 persons on-shore and more than 55,000 seafarers of various nationalities onboard their vessels.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce (KTTO): KTTO was founded in Nicosia, Cyprus, in 1958 and represents businesses in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots. KTTO is recognized legally in the south because its establishment pre-dates the 1974 conflict. Due to this unique status, KTTO assists in the implementation of the Green Line Trade Regulation and with bicomunal business-related initiatives. KTTO is a public law chamber and membership is obligatory for businesses in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots.

Cyprus Turkish Chamber of Industry (CTCI): CTCI, established in 1977 as a non-governmental organization, works to assist the development of Turkish Cypriot industrial establishments, in order to expand the field of their activities and to increase their efficiency. CTCI lobbies the Turkish Cypriot authorities for the development of business-related legislation, and protects the rights and interests of its members.

Turkish Cypriot Businessmen's Association (İŞAD): İŞAD was established in 1993 and has members from all sectors of the business community. Functioning as a think tank, İŞAD regularly expresses views both in business-economic related matters in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots, as well as views on politics and the Cyprus issue. İŞAD regularly promotes a free market economy and encourages transparency in governance.

Limitations on Selling U.S. Products and Services

Republic of Cyprus:

Please see "Limits on Foreign Control and Right to Private Ownership and Establishment," under the Investment Climate Statement.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

There are no limitations in selling U.S. products and services in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots.

Trade Financing

Methods of Payment

The usual method of payment for business transactions is by letter of credit, with 90-days credit.

Credit rating reports are available through the following firms:

- **[InfoCredit Group Cyprus Ltd.](#)**

Address: Philippou Hadjigeorgiou 5A, Acropolis, Nicosia 2006

Tel.: +357-22-398000

Fax: +357-22-458937

E-mail: info@infocreditgroup.com

- **[Rime Information Bureau Ltd.](#)**

Address: 8 Vasiliou Voulgaroktonou, Politis Newspaper Building, Nicosia 1010

Tel.: +357-22-768662

Fax: +357-22-768660

E-mail: rimeib@rimeib.com

- **Argus Information Service Ltd.**

Member of Lyssiotis Group

10A Salaminos Ave.

Alexia Court, 2nd Floor

P.O. Box 21176, 1503 Nicosia

Tel.: +357-22-348042

Fax: +357-22-348020

E-mail: janett@cytanet.com.cy

E-mail2: foulla.ar@cytanet.com.cy

- **[Artemis Bank Information Systems Ltd](#)**

Address: 77 Strovolos Avenue , Office 501, 2018 Strovolos, Nicosia

Tel.: +357-22-454791, +357-99-621168 (cell)

Fax: +357-22-454786

Email: achilleas.amvrosiou@artemis.com.cy

InfoCredit Group Cyprus Ltd. and Rime Information Bureau Ltd., also offer debt collection services.

Visa, Mastercard, and American Express credit cards are widely used and accepted.

For more information about the methods of payment or other trade finance options, please read the Trade Finance Guide available at <https://www.trade.gov/trade-finance-guide-quick-reference-us-exporters>

Banking Systems

Republic of Cyprus:

The Cypriot banking system is still restructuring following significant consolidation after the 2013 financial crisis. Demand for new lending remains constrained as the economy is deleveraging under the burden of a non-performing loan (NPL) portfolio worth 27.6 percent of total lending at the end of March 2020. Progress in addressing NPLs has been slow, but new legislation on foreclosures and insolvency passed in July 2018 is helping banks address this problem more effectively. To support these efforts, the European Investment Bank and European Bank of Reconstruction and Development have made lending and guarantee programs available in Cyprus. Standard banking services in the ROC compare well with other European countries and the United States. The [Central Bank of Cyprus](#) supervises private banks and requires them to meet Bank for International Settlements (BIS) standards as well as corresponding directives by the European Union. Bank financial statements are in compliance with international standards and audited by internationally recognized auditors. Since 2001, a deposit insurance scheme has been in operation, under the Banking Law of 1997. Regulations passed in the summer of 2009 raised the guaranteed amount under this scheme from EUR 20,000 to EUR 100,000 per depositor.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Banking supervision has improved in the past few years. The “Central Bank” oversees and regulates all branches of local banks, foreign banks, private banks, and international banking units. In addition to the “Central Bank” and the “Development Bank”, there are 21 banks in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots, of which 16 are Turkish

Cypriot-owned banks, and five are branch banks from Turkey. Two of the five members of the “Central Bank’s” “Board of Directors” are from Turkey, as is the “Central Bank Governor.” Turkish Cypriot banks do not have access to the SWIFT system so Turkish Cypriot banks rely on their correspondent banking relationships for foreign currency transactions.

Visit this link for more information about [banks](#) and the [banking system](#) in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots (Note: the websites are only available in the Turkish language).

Foreign Exchange Controls

Republic of Cyprus:

There are no capital restrictions in the Republic of Cyprus. As with other EU countries, travelers to Cyprus must declare cash sums greater than EUR 10,000 upon arrival.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

There are no capital controls in effect. Travelers exiting the area administered by Turkish Cypriots -- whether residents or non-residents -- may carry up to USD 10,000 in local or foreign currency without prior permission. Travelers must obtain authorization from the Turkish Cypriot "Central Bank" for sums over this threshold and declare the money to the "Department of Customs" at the port of exit. There is no restriction for the import of currency into the area administered by Turkish Cypriots.

U.S. Banks & Local Correspondent Banks

Republic of Cyprus:

There are 30 banks in Cyprus of which seven are incorporated locally. The remaining banks are branches or subsidiaries of foreign-incorporated banks or representative offices, conducting their operations mainly with non-residents. Some of them have subsidiaries dealing with insurance services, investment banking, and other related services. Most of these banks, particularly those incorporated domestically, have correspondent arrangements with U.S. banks and offer all types of services, including deposit accounts, lending advances, leasing, credit card facilities, and automatic banking machines. Though Ex-Im Bank does not offer any specific programs for the Republic of Cyprus, exporters may still avail themselves of their export financing assistance if the transaction meets the Bank’s criteria. For more information on the banking system, please visit the [Central Bank of Cyprus](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Some branch banks have correspondent facilities with the United States. The full list of domestic banks in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots can be obtained from the [Turkish Cypriot Banks Association](#) (Note: The website is only available in the Turkish language).

Protecting Intellectual Property

In any foreign market companies should consider several general principles for effective management of their intellectual property. For background on these principles please link to the following article on [Protecting Intellectual Property](#) and [Stopfakes.gov](#), or contact ITA’s Office of Intellectual Property Rights Director, Stevan Mitchell at Stevan.Mitchell@trade.gov.

Note: See section on Intellectual Property Rights under the Investment Climate Statement (ICS).

IP Attaché Contact Cyprus:

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Selling to the Public Sector

Selling to the Government

Republic of Cyprus:

For most projects or large-scale purchases, the ROC is required to issue a tender or request for proposals following [EU procurement regulations](#). Tender documents are typically released in the Greek language, which is an official EU language. In certain instances, usually for big projects, the tender documents are also released in the English language. The United States continues to encourage the ROC to issue more tender documents in English to attract international bidders, particularly on ICT and other global sector tenders. U.S. companies can bid on any tender either directly or through a local agent. The government posts all tenders on the e-procurement website where prospective bidders can acquire tender documents and submit their proposals. To register, and for more detailed information on how the website works, please click [here](#). Semi-governmental organizations have their own tender boards and evaluating committees. Under the procurement law, evaluating and awarding tenders is the responsibility of each Ministry's or state-owned enterprise's tender board. A [Tenders Review Authority](#) (TRA) examines complaints from bidders and ensures that project awards are not mishandled.

Information on upcoming tenders is available through the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia, Political/Economic Section (e-mail: nicosiaecon@state.gov). Alternatively, you can find relevant information through [Export.Gov](#) or through the [Business Information Database System](#) (BIDS).

Ministry technical committees evaluate government tenders. Bids are usually evaluated first on technical merit and then on cost, depending on the value of the project. Bidders on government contracts are advised to offer products/services that meet exact tender specifications.

The ROC agreed to abide by the [World Trade Organization Government Procurement Agreement](#) by way of its accession to the European Union in 2004.

U.S. companies bidding on Government tenders may also qualify for U.S. Government advocacy. A unit of the U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration, the Advocacy Center, coordinates U.S. Government interagency advocacy efforts on behalf of U.S. exporters bidding on public sector contracts with international governments and government agencies. The Advocacy Center works closely with our network of the U.S. Commercial Service worldwide and inter-agency partners to ensure that exporters of U.S. products and services have the best possible chance of winning government contracts. Advocacy assistance can take many forms but often involves the U.S. Embassy or other U.S. Government agencies expressing support for the U.S. bidders directly to the foreign government. Consult the [Advocacy Center](#) for additional information.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The ["Central Tenders Commission \(CTC\)"](#) (Note: the website is only available in the Turkish language) in the "Ministry of Finance" is responsible for all "government" tenders except those issued by "municipalities." Each "municipality" has its own tender board and follows its own regulations and procedures for issuing a tender. Tenders are announced in the "Official Gazette" or in a minimum of two local Turkish language newspapers. Most large tenders permit participation from international companies, who can participate through an agent, or with a local partner if the tender specifications clearly state that the tender is open for international participation. The agent or partner must be fully registered in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots in order to represent any international company.

Financing of Projects

Republic of Cyprus:

Cyprus's sovereign credit rating has been improving since 2013 but remains at low investment grade (BBB- by both S&P and Fitch) or just below investment grade (Ba2 by Moody's). A list of the current ratings is available from the [Ministry of Finance](#).

Obtaining credit from local banks has become easier since 2013, although still constrained by the general trend towards deleveraging and stricter lending criteria following recapitalization of the banking sector. Banks in Cyprus employ all modern methods of cross-border financing, including letters of credit, bills for collection, documentary credit, and cash against documents.

Multilateral Development Banks and Financing Government Sales. Price, payment terms, and financing can be a significant factor in winning a government contract. Many governments finance public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks (MDB). A helpful guide for working with the MDBs is the [Guide to Doing Business with the Multilateral Development Banks](#). The U.S. Department of Commerce's (USDOC) International Trade Administration (ITA) has a Foreign Commercial Service Officer stationed at each of the five different Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs): the African Development Bank; the Asian Development Bank; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the Inter-American Development Bank; and the World Bank.

Learn more by contacting the:

- Commercial Liaison Office to the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#)
- Commercial Liaison Office to the [World Bank](#)

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Domestic banks and Turkish Cypriot businesses have limited access to international capital.

Business Travel

Business Customs

Despite the long and hot summer, the conventional business dress code usually calls for a suit and tie for men and conservative attire for women. More casual wear is usually worn when entertaining business guests, depending on the venue. It is considered a courtesy for businesspeople to host business lunches or dinners while discussing possible cooperation. Business cards are traditionally exchanged at business meetings and gifts are acceptable in the private sector and to a lesser extent in the public sector.

Travel Advisory

Cyprus enjoys one of the lowest crime rates in Europe, good hygienic conditions, and a modern array of goods and services. Visitors may obtain travel advisory information [here](#). Additionally, U.S. businesses in Cyprus can contact the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia and request a security briefing from the Regional Security Officer.

Visa Requirements

U.S. companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that security evaluations are handled via an interagency process. Visa applicants should go to the following links:

[State Department Visa Website](#)

[U.S. Embassy Consular Section](#)

Republic of Cyprus:

U.S. citizens do not need visas to enter Cyprus. Persons arriving with the intention to work must obtain special work permits. For more detailed information, please visit the [Ministry of Interior, Civil Registry and Migration Department website](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

U.S. citizens do not need visas to enter the area administered by Turkish Cypriots. Visitors arriving in the Republic of Cyprus are normally able to cross into the area administered by Turkish Cypriots without hindrance, although on occasion, travelers have reported difficulties at both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot checkpoints, particularly if the traveler originally arrived on the island via Ercan airport. Policy and procedures regarding such travel are subject to change. More information on current procedures may be obtained at the U.N. Buffer Zone Ledra Palace checkpoint in Nicosia.

Currency

Republic of Cyprus:

The currency in the ROC is the Euro (€). Using any other currency to pay goods and services is quite uncommon. Banks exchange many other currencies, but transactions are subject to commission. Credit and debit cards such as Visa and MasterCard are widely used in hotels, stores, restaurants, supermarkets, and petrol stations, with Diners Club, Eurocard, and American Express less commonly accepted. ATMs are widely available and located throughout the island. Exchange rates and bank commissions are charged when ATM is used for foreign currency withdrawal and for payments with cards in foreign currencies. International transfers, possible through local banks and private financial agencies such as Western Union, are also subject to commission. Banks do not issue traveler checks but can cash them at a commission. Traveler's checks are not used as a direct form of payment.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The local currency in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots is Turkish Lira, but the Euro, U.S. Dollar, and British pound are accepted widely in almost all places. Banks exchange all currencies. Credit and debit cards such as Visa and MasterCard are widely used in hotels, stores, restaurants, supermarkets, petrol stations. ATMs are located throughout the north. Exchange offices also exist to exchange mainly the commonly used currencies (Turkish Lira, Euro, British Pound, U.S. Dollar). International transfers are possible through all banks.

Telecommunications/Electronics

Republic of Cyprus:

The island's telecommunications system is advanced and efficient. More than 190 countries can be reached through fully automatic direct dialing. Installation services are usually completed within a few days. Telefax and internet service are widely available. The average Internet connection speed is 8 Mega Bytes per Second (MBPS), although speeds of up to 100 MBPS are readily available for a higher fee. Wi-Fi is widely available in hotels, restaurants, and coffee shops. GSM cellular phone technology is the standard and it is delivered on European frequencies. The Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CyTA – a semi-governmental organization), Epic, PrimeTel and Cablenet provide fixed line, internet, and cellular phone services. Cablenet acquired its MNO license in 2019 and is now expanding its mobile telephony services. Epic also offers Blackberry services. The Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Digital Policy released documents for a 5G spectrum license on July 24 and hopes to have successful bidders start the implementation process for 5G technology in 2021. The ROC is also part of the “5Genesis” (5th Generation End-to-end Network, Experimentation, System Integration, and Showcasing) EU project, which is a pilot platform that is part of the EU's Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation “Horizon 2020” project. Along with Athens, Málaga, Surrey, and Berlin, the ROC through the city of Limassol is one of the five platforms of the 5Genesis facility. Since July 2019 mobile phones issued in the ROC work in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots and vice versa but significant roaming charges apply. [The Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulations \(OCECPR\)](#) regulates all telecommunication services (Note: The website is only available in the Greek language).

The Electricity and plug system in Cyprus are the same as the UK with a 240 Voltage and the plugs used are 3-pin.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

The “Telecommunications Authority” provides telephone, telex, internet/ADSL, fax, and telegram transmission services. The telephone service is integrated into the Turkish market and relies on Turkey’s country code. Two private companies, KKTCcell (subsidiary of Turkish company Turkcell) and Telsim (now owned by the British Vodafone Company in Turkey) provide GSM-Mobile services (including 3G). 4G is not yet available in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots. Internet services are widely available, including broadband services.

Transportation

Republic of Cyprus:

Inner city travel is often by taxi, public buses, or rental car. Cars are right-hand drive and rental cars are available in manual and automatic drive options. Public transportation within cities and between towns has recently improved with more frequent routes, and old buses have been replaced with new modern ones. However, public transportation is still not as frequent or convenient as in many other EU countries. Taxis are metered. The cost for a taxi from the airport in Larnaca to Nicosia averages 50 EUR. Prices vary depending on the season and the visitor's car selection for car rentals. Air traffic is served through two international airports situated in the cities of Larnaca and Paphos. Many international airlines offer daily flights to major destinations in Europe and the Middle East. The ports of Limassol and Larnaca serve the country's external trade and seaborne passenger traffic, acting also as transshipment centers for the region.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Public transportation in the north is often by public bus or taxi. Rental car services are also available. Distances between cities are relatively short. Roads are generally serviceable but in worse condition than in government-controlled areas. Only Turkish carriers fly into Ercan airport and all flights must currently touchdown in Turkey. Most goods destined for the area administered by Turkish Cypriots are transshipped through the Turkish port of Mersin, significantly increasing the cost of shipping cargo. The two ports of Famagusta and Kyrenia are used for cargo and passenger transportation.

Language

The official languages in Cyprus are Greek, Turkish. Greek and English are widely spoken in the Republic of Cyprus. Turkish is spoken in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots, where English is also increasingly spoken. English is usually preferred in business dealings.

Health

Republic of Cyprus:

The World Health Organization acknowledges Cyprus’ health care as one of high standard and equivalent to other developed countries. As of June 1, 2020, the Cyprus Health Insurance Organization implemented the National Health Insurance Scheme (GESY) where all Cypriot citizens are covered for outpatient and inpatient health care services. Most facilities provide adequate medical care with modern equipment and English-speaking medical professionals. Doctors are mainly trained in Europe or the United States. Almost all medicine brands are available in Cyprus and can be purchased at pharmacies through the GESY. Foreign nationals entering Cyprus do not require any vaccinations since Cyprus has no dangerous infectious diseases. The [Medical and Public Health Services](#) department carries out frequent and strict inspections of food and water safety.

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

Adequate access to health care is available. Some patients note the lack of modern equipment at “state” hospitals. Most medical professionals were trained in Turkey. While there are general hospitals in every city and several private clinics, those who can afford it tend to prefer receiving treatment at private hospitals.

Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays

Republic of Cyprus:

Local time in Cyprus is according to the Eastern European Time Zone.

For a list of holidays observed by businesspersons in Cyprus for 2020, please visit the [News in Cyprus](#).

For a list of banking holidays, please visit the [Central Bank of Cyprus](#).

Businesspersons should avoid making appointments on public holidays. The months of July and August are relatively slow months because many businesses close for summer vacation. Other dates to avoid when setting appointments are Christmas and Easter.

Government Offices Standard Business Hours:

Monday – Friday: 7:30 – 15:00

Banking sector:

Monday – Friday: 7:30 – 15:00

(Note: Teller services are available to the public from 8:30 to 14:30 from Monday through Thursday and 8:30 to 14:00 on Fridays. Automatic tellers are available in larger cities but there are not as many one would expect to find in U.S. cities.

Private sector standard business hours vary. The most common work hours companies follow are from 8:00 to 17:00 with a one-hour break between 13:00 and 14:00.

Business travelers to Cyprus seeking appointments with U.S. Embassy Nicosia officials should contact the Political / Economic office in advance. Section staff can be reached by phone at +357-22-393520, +357-22-393362, or +357-22-393361 or through [email](#).

Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots:

For a list of bank holidays, visit the [Turkish Cypriot Banks Association](#)

“Government” Offices:

May – September

Monday – Friday 08:00 – 14:30

Thursdays - 08:00 – 12:30 and 13:00 – 17:30

October-April

Monday – Friday 08:00 – 16:15

Thursdays - 08:00 – 12:30 and 13:00 – 17:30

Standard business hours vary. The most common work hours companies follow are from 8:00 to 17:00 with a one-hour break between 13:00 and 14:00.

Banks:

Monday – Friday 08:00 – 12:30 and 14:00 – 15:30

Factories:

Monday – Friday

07:30 – 16:00

Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings

There are no restrictions for temporary entry of materials or personal belongings within the limits of the law (e.g. no guns, narcotics, etc.).

Investment Climate Statement (ICS)

The U.S. Department of State Investment Climate Statements provide information on the business climates of more than 170 economies and are prepared by economic officers stationed in embassies and posts around the world. They analyze a variety of economies that are or could be markets for U.S. businesses.

Topics include Openness to Investment, Legal and Regulatory systems, Dispute Resolution, Intellectual Property Rights, Transparency, Performance Requirements, State-Owned Enterprises, Responsible Business Conduct, and Corruption.

These statements highlight persistent barriers to further U.S. investment. Addressing these barriers would expand high-quality, private sector-led investment in infrastructure, further women’s economic empowerment, and facilitate a healthy business environment for the digital economy. To access the ICS, visit the U.S. Department of State [Investment Climate Statement](#) website.

Political Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of Cyprus, please read the U.S. relations with Cyprus [factsheet](#).