

INDIA-CYPRUS BILATERAL RELATIONS

India and Republic of Cyprus (RoC) have enjoyed excellent bilateral relations which are based on friendship, mutual respect and close cooperation, particularly in the context of international organizations. Over the past six decades, the relationship has grown stronger, including in the areas of economy and trade. The prospects of further deepening our bilateral ties are promising in the years ahead. To achieve this, both countries are taking focused approach on priority areas for cooperation, notably in the field of economic engagement.

The foundations of this long-standing relationship were laid by the first President of RoC, Archbishop Makarios, and the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. They were among the pioneers of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), who realised the dreams and aspirations of their respective people for self-determination and nationhood. President Archbishop Makarios deeply appreciated the support of India rendered to the Cypriot struggle against British colonialism.

Diplomatic ties between India and RoC came into effect two years after Cyprus became independent from British colonial rule i.e. on 10 February 1962. Over the past 63 years India has been one of the most trustworthy friends of Cyprus. Both countries adhered to diplomatic values, norms and principles governing the conduct of states' international affairs. Both countries support similar positions on major regional and international issues and have collaborated constructively in the United Nations, Commonwealth and other international fora.

India has consistently endorsed the solution of Cyprus issue based on UNSC resolutions, international law and the EU acquis. India supports a bi-zonal bi-communal federation based on UN Resolutions as a solution to the Cyprus problem.

ROC has supported India in numerous international bodies and remains one of the India's dependable friends. It supports India's candidature as a permanent member of the expanded UN Security Council. It has also extended its full support for the India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement, within the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) and the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which helps India address its increasing energy needs and benefit its economic development.

Within the EU, Cyprus is a good friend and keen supporter of India. It contributes actively towards the further enhancement of India-EU relations, within the framework of their strategic partnership. Cyprus recognizes and greatly appreciates India's contribution to global affairs and its prominent and stabilizing role in South Asia. It also commends India for its participation in UN peacekeeping operations throughout the world, as it has been one of the beneficiaries. India had contributed three Force Commanders serving in UN Peace Keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) since its creation in 1964, namely Lieutenant General PS Gyani, Major General Diwan Prem Chand, and General KS Thimayya, who died in harness in 1965 in Cyprus, was honoured by a commemorative stamp and naming an avenue in Larnaca in RoC in his memory in 1966. At present, one officer from Indian Army is serving in the UNFICYP.

High Level Visits

Over the years, political relations have been maintained and strengthened through a series of high-level visits. The last high level bilateral visit was that of a State visit of President Anastasiades of RoC to India from 24-29 April 2017; while Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind visited RoC from 2-4 September 2018. In addition, several Ministerial as well as Parliamentary-level visits have taken place. Both sides have signed numerous bilateral agreements and MoUs.

Recent High-Level Engagements

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

EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar had a virtual meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of RoC, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides on 16 February 2021. Both sides reviewed and appreciated the upward trajectory in the bilateral ties witnessed in the recent years and agreed to maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges, economic cooperation and people to people ties. EAM had a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of RoC, Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides during the sidelines of CHOGM 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda on 23 June 2022 and at the sidelines of 77th UNGA in New York on 24 September 2022.

Mr. Nicos Nouris, Interior Minister of RoC visited India to attend 3rd Ministerial Conference on Counter Terrorism "No Money for Terror" from 18-19 November 2022. On the sidelines of the conference, Mr. Nicos Nouris had a bilateral meeting with Shri Nitya Nand Rai, Minister of State for Home Affairs.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited RoC from 29-31 December 2022. During the visit, he met with Acting President and President of the House of Representatives (Speaker) of RoC, Ms. Annita Demetriou and the Foreign Minister of RoC, Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides on 29 December 2022. During the visit, both sides signed an MoU on Defence and Military Cooperation, and a Declaration of Intent on Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA). Apart from this, RoC also joined the membership of International Solar Alliance during the visit. EAM and Foreign Minister, addressed Economic and Business Forum held in Limassol on 30 December 2022. EAM also addressed Indian community at an event in Larnaca on 30 December 2022.

EAM had a meeting with Foreign Minister of RoC, Dr. Constantinos Kombos at the sidelines of EU-Indo Pacific Forum in Stockholm on 13 May 2023. Both leaders also met during the sidelines of 78th UNGA High-Level Week in New York on 23 September 2023; 79th UNGA on 25 September 2024 and on the sidelines of the Doha Forum on 07 December 2024 in Doha. Both leaders also had two telephonic conversations ports Pahalgam terror attack on 29 April 2025 and 30 May 2025.

Shri Shantanu Thakur, Minister of State (MoS) for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways of India, visited RoC from 08-11 October 2023 to attend the "Cyprus Maritime 2023 Conference" in Limassol, organized by the Deputy Shipping Ministry of RoC. The Maritime Service Exhibition was inaugurated by the President of RoC, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, along with the MoS and the Shipping Deputy Minister of RoC, Ms. Marina Hadjimanolis. MoS had a bilateral meeting with Deputy Minister Hadjimanolis during the sidelines of the Conference. MoS also attended an Indian Shipping Community event as the Guest of Honour, organized by the High Commission. MoS interacted with members of the Indian Community, Indian professionals, eminent persons from the shipping sector.

Dr. Nicodemos Damianou, Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy of RoC, led a Cypriot delegation to India from 5-6 September 2024, to participate in the "CII India Mediterranean Business Conclave" in New Delhi. At the conference, he

joined a ministerial session on trade and investment with India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and delivered a closing speech on "India-Middle East: shaping cooperation for the future," also attended by EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar. The visit included a "Cyprus Country Roundtable" and an event organized by Invest Cyprus to promote Cyprus as a technology and innovation hub and a gateway for investments between Europe and India. Additionally, Dr. Damianou met with India's Minister of State for Ministry of Commerce & Industry and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Jitin Prasada to discuss enhancing cooperation in digital transformation, AI, and cybersecurity.

A high-level Indian delegation, led by Hon'ble Justice Mr. Surya Kant, Judge, Supreme Court of India, and Ld. Attorney General Mr. R. Venkataramani, visited RoC to participate in the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) International Conference at University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus), held from 7-8 October 2024. During the visit, the delegation also met with Ms. Katerina Stamatiou, President of the Supreme Court, and Ms. Rea Limnatitou, Former President of the Court of Appeal. They also met with the Attorney General of Cyprus, George L. Savvides and Deputy Attorney-General, Savvas Angelides. Additionally, they visited the "Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center to learn about child welfare initiatives and engaged in discussions on legal reforms for children's rights.

Institutional Mechanism

Foreign Office Consultations: The 6th round of FOC was held on 26 November 2024 in Nicosia. The Indian side was led by Shri Arun Kumar Sahu, Additional Secretary (Central Europe) and the Cypriot side was led by Ms. Thessalia Salina Shambos, Political Director. During the consultations, both sides reviewed the entire gamut of India-Cyprus bilateral relations, including high-level exchanges, trade, investment, research and innovation, digitalization, connectivity, education, culture, and people-to-people ties. Both sides also explored avenues to deepen the bilateral relationship in areas such as renewable energy, fintech, start-ups, and technology. They exchanged perspectives on important regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Defence Cooperation

India has concurrent accreditation of its Defense Attaché (DA) to RoC (based at Embassy of India, Cairo). An MoU on Defence Cooperation was signed on 29 December 2022 during EAM's visit to RoC from 29-31 December 2024.

As a follow up to the MoU on Defense and Military Cooperation signed in December 2022 during EAM's visit to Cyprus, a Bilateral Defence Cooperation Programme (BDCP) for 2025 was signed in Nicosia on 23 January 2025.

A Cypriot Defence Delegation, led by Ms. Anna Aristotelous, Permanent Secretary of the Defence Ministry of RoC, participated in AERO India 2025 in Bengaluru from 10-14 February 2025. On the sidelines of the event, Ms. Anna Aristotelous met with Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth and held productive discussions on enhancing defence cooperation between the two countries.

Economic and Commercial Relations

The economic and commercial ties between India and Cyprus have grown steadily, supported by a shared commitment to enhancing bilateral trade and investment. Trade between the two countries has seen a positive trajectory, with key Indian exports to Cyprus including pharmaceuticals, textiles, iron & steel, ceramic products, machinery, and chemicals. Conversely, Cyprus exports pharmaceuticals, beverages, and manufactured goods to India. Trade flows have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with bilateral trade in 2023-24 amounting to US\$ 137 Million.

Framework and Economic and Commercial Co-Operations

Joint Economic Committee (JEC) on Economic, Trade, Scientific and Industrial Co-operation: In April 1989, India and RoC signed an agreement on Economic, Trade, Scientific, and Industrial Cooperation, leading to the establishment of the Joint Economic Committee (JEC). The last meeting of this Committee was held virtually on 21 October 2021.

Cyprus-India Business Association (CIBA): On 16th September 2005, under the auspices of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce, the Cyprus-India Business Association (CIBA) was established to strengthen economic ties between RoC and India by promoting trade, investment, and business partnerships. High Commission in partnership with CIBA organizes various commercial/economic events to promote bilateral economic engagement.

Invest India and Invest Cyprus: In December 2021, Invest India and Invest Cyprus signed an MOU with the intention of enhancing their mutual investments activities and promoting overall business cooperation between Indian and Cypriot companies. To implement the MoU, first meeting between Invest India and Invest Cyprus was held in November 2023 virtually.

MoUs between Regional Chambers: An MoU was signed on 20 April 2023 between Goa Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and Limassol Chamber of Commerce & Industry virtually to promote and further enhance business and trade relations between India and RoC. An MoU was signed in May 2024 between the Bangalore Chamber of Industry & Commerce, and the Larnaca Chamber of Commerce virtually to promote and further enhance business and trade relations between both the countries. On 27 November 2024, Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) signed an MoU with Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

India-Greece-Cyprus (IGC) Business and Investment Council was officially launched in Mumbai on 13 February 2025. This initiatives follows the signing of an MoU between Euro Bank S.A. and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in September 2024, Kolkata. The main objective of IGC Business and Investment Council is to accelerate trade, investment and strategic cooperation across diverse sectors including infrastructure, shipping, technology, financial services, and SMEs and to create a robust platform for companies of all the three countries to work together, strengthening cross-border trade and investment.

Bilateral Trade

Bilateral trade between India and RoC has remained steady amidst fluctuations over the recent years. Bilateral trade between the two countries was US\$ 136.96 Million for April 2023-March 2024. The figures for the last five years are as follows:

Trade Figures

(All figures USD mln)

Trade	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Imports by RoC from India	443.28	90.11	139.85	81.88	94.92

Exports from RoC to India	74.43	23.98	74.32	116.17	42.04
Cyprus – India Trade	517.71	114.09	214.17	198.05	136.96
India – Cyprus Balance of Trade	368.85	66.13	65.53	(-)34.29	52.88

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

Major items of export from India: Organic Chemicals, Pharmaceutical Products, Fish and Crustaceans, Molluscs and other Aquatic Invertebrates, Iron & Steel, Ceramic products, Electrical Machinery and Equipment and parts thereof, Sound Recorders and Reproducers, Television Image and parts and accessories of such articles.

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

FDI: RoC is among the top 10 investors in India with cumulative investments of USD 14.65 Billion during April 2000 – March 2025 (DPIIT estimates). These investments as FDI equity inflows were in sectors including services, computer and software, auto manufacture, manufacturing industries, real estate, cargo handling, construction, shipping and pharmaceuticals.

DTAA: The revised India-Cyprus DTAA was signed on 18 November 2016 in Nicosia. India retrospectively rescinded the classification of RoC in the “Notified Jurisdictional Area” from 01 November 2013. The revised agreement provides for source-based taxation for Capital Gains along with international best practices and minimum standards as per the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Project of the OECD.

RoC was classified in Funds as Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) eligible for Category-I license. RoC is one of the three countries, outside FATF (Financial Action Task Force) countries, to obtain such an approval from India. The approval was accorded in June 2021 under the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) (Foreign Portfolio Investors) Regulations, 2019. The classification offers facilitation of Investment funds from RoC for investors and asset managers in the Indian markets.

Start-up and Innovation Cooperation

India participated as a partner country during Reflect Festival 2023 (20-21 September), and again in Reflect Festival 2024 (30-31 May 2024) in Limassol. Reflect Festival is the largest tech event of the region, during which 8 Indian start-ups under the aegis of DPIIT participated in 2023. However, in 2024 in addition to 8 Indian start-ups, Pristyn Care, an Indian Unicorn, also joined the event. This is a new area of cooperation between India and RoC, with Indian companies following upon the opportunities present in the sector. Startup India and Invest Cyprus are considering to formalize a startup bridge between the two countries.

Cultural Cooperation

India and RoC enjoy vibrant cultural relations. There are lot of commonalities between the cultures, values and ethos of both countries. India and Cyprus signed an agreement on Cultural Cooperation in New Delhi on 24th October 1980. Both countries from time to time exchange cultural groups. High Commission in partnership with stakeholders organize cultural events, National Days, IDY etc. in Cyprus.

There have been several goodwill gestures between the two countries, marking their special regard and gratitude for each other. India has named an avenue in New Delhi in honour of Archbishop Makarios, the first President of RoC. The street on which High Commission of India in Nicosia is located is named after Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. A bust of Mahatma Gandhi was installed in the garden adjacent to the Parliament of RoC in July 1972 and the avenue in the front to the bust was named as "Jawaharlal Nehru Avenue" in 1983. RoC issued two postal stamps on the occasion of Centenary Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 1970. On the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary, RoC issued a commemorative stamp on 10 September 2019. During his visit to RoC from 29-31 December 2022, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and Acting President Ms. Annita Demetriou, also the Speaker of the House of Representatives, jointly issued a Commemorative Stamp on the occasion of 75 years of India's Independence and 60 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between Republic of India and Republic of Cyprus.

Indian community

There are around 11,119 Indians living in RoC. The Indian diaspora mainly consists of professionals working primarily in shipping, IT, Fintech, farmhands, domestic workers and students. Indian diaspora organizes events such as Diwali, Holi, Ganesha Mahotsav, Maha Shivratri and Vaisakhi celebrations. This vibrant community actively participates in cultural programs organized by the Mission which include Indian festivals, Photo Exhibitions, Dance/music performances, Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, Gandhi Jayanti, National Days and International Day of Yoga etc.

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