CYPRUS (Kypros)

The Republic of Cyprus is an island located in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Turkey, and constitutes the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. While Cyprus sees itself as European, it can be classified as either that or as part of the Middle East geopolitically. The northern part of the island is administered by Turkish Cypriots and has declared itself the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”. However, this is only recognized by Turkey. The country continues to struggle with tensions between the Greek Cypriot majority and the Turkish Cypriot minority. The Republic of Cyprus is a presidential democracy that has been governed by President Nikos Anastasiadis of the Democratic Rally since February 2013. After being a British colony, it gained independence in 1960 and ever since celebrates Independence Day on October 1st as its national holiday.

QUICK FACTS
Population: 1,205,575 (2016)
Area: 9,251 sq. km. (0.6 time the size of Connecticut)
Capital: Nicosia (116,000 pop.)
Languages: Greek, Turkish (official)
GDP Per Capita: $34,400 (2016)
Head of State: President Nikos Anastasiadis
Head of Government: President Nikos Anastasiadis

EDUCATION
Education in Cyprus is compulsory from ages 5 to 15. The education system is divided up into pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education, and higher education. Especially during primary education, there is a heavy focus on the development of intercultural awareness, tolerance, and respect of otherness, given Cyprus complex cultural composition.

RELIGION
The constitution of Cyprus provides for freedom of religion. The big majority of Cypriots are Orthodox Christians, with 89.1% affiliating as such. Moreover, other religious groups include 2.9% Roman Catholics, 2% Protestants, 1.8% Muslims, 1% Buddhists, and 0.6% non-affiliated. The group of people having no religious affiliation at all has been increasing in recent times. This data, however, only covers the government-controlled area of the island, not the self-declared Turkish part, in which many people are Muslims.

ETNICITY & DEMOGRAPHICS
In terms of ethnic groups, Greeks make up the vast majority of Cypriots in the Republic of Cyprus at 98.8%. Other ethnicities include Maronites, Armenians, and Turkish-Cypriots. In the northern part of the island, governed by Turkish-Cypriots, the ethnic group is almost exclusively Turks. Ever since the split between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots in 1974, the country has experienced ongoing struggles, at times violent, between these two ethnic groups. The birth rate in Cyprus significantly outnumbers the death rate, and combined with a pretty substantial positive net migration ratio, Cyprus experienced a population growth rate of 1.38% as of 2016.
Famous Cypriots include tennis player Marcos Baghdatis, pop artists Anna Vissi, businessman turned fraudster Asil Nadir, director Hussein Chalayan, and singers George Michael and Cat Stevens, who are both half Cypriot.

Cyprus has been a member of the European Union since May 1, 2004 and has also accepted the Euro as its currency in 2008, making it a member of the eurozone. However, Cyprus is not a member of the border-free Schengen area. As of June 2017, Cyprus currently holds the presidency of the Council of the EU for the second time. Additionally, there are 6 members of the European Parliament from Cyprus.

Cyprists in the USA
The first Cypriots presumably arrived in the US as early as the 1930s, but there is no actual data on it until the 1950s. The greatest emigration periods from Cyprus were in the late 1950s and late 1970s. Today, there are a little over 7,500 people with Cypriot heritage living in the United States, most of them in New York and New Jersey.

USEFUL LINKS
https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries/member-countries/cyprus_en

CONTEMPORARY CYPRUS & RELATIONS TO EUROPE
The Republic of Cyprus, meaning the area of the island under government control, has a market economy dominated by the service sector, which accounts for more than four-fifths of Cyprus’ GDP. Tourism, financial services, shipping, and real estate have traditionally been the most important economic sectors.

After the economy initially grew following the EU membership, Cyprus was hit hard by the global financial crisis in 2009, not least because of an overextended banking sector with excessive exposure to Greek debt. In July 2012, Cyprus became the fifth eurozone member to request an economic bailout program from the “Troika”, a connection of European Commission, European Central Bank, and the IMF. Since 2015, Cyprus’ economy has grown again and is projected to continue to do so in the coming years.

The flag is composed of a copper-colored silhouette of the island above two olive-green colored, crossed olive branches, centered on a white field.

GREEK-CYPRIOT WORDS
Hi ........................................Geia
Bye ............................................Antío
Good morning .........................Káliṃéra
Yes ..............................................Naí
No ................................................Óchi
Please.................................Parakalo poly
Thank you .................................Efcharistó
How are you? ......................Pós eísei?
I do not understand ...........Den katalavaino
I understand ......................Katalavaino
What is your name? .............Pos se lêne?
My name is ..................To ónomá mou eínine
Where are you from? ..........Apo pou eíseis?
Do you speak English? ........Milás angliká?