

Universal Periodic Review
(18th session, January – February 2014)
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information
(to Part I. A. and to Part III F, J, K, and P)

Cyprus

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

A. Scope of international obligations: Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Acceptance 09/06/1970	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. (1989)	Not state party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	Acceptance 14/08/1975			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	Ratified 24/02/2006			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	Ratified 19/12/2006			Right to take part in cultural life

II. Input to Part III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law to items F, J, K, and P

Right to education

Normative Framework:

1. Constitutional framework: The Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus¹ in force as from the declaration of its independence in 1960 enshrines the right to free and compulsory education. Article 20 provides that “1. Every person has the right to receive, and every person or institution has the right to give, instruction or education subject to such formalities, conditions or restrictions as are in accordance with the relevant communal law and are necessary only in the interests of the security of the Republic or the constitutional order or the public safety or the public order or the public health or the public morals or the standard and quality of education or for the protection of the rights and liberties of others including the right of the parents to secure for their children such education as is in conformity with their religious convictions. 2. Free primary education shall be made available by the Greek and the Turkish Communal Chambers in the respective communal primary schools. 3. Primary education shall be compulsory for all citizens of such school age as may be determined by a relevant communal law. 4. Education, other than primary education, shall be made available by the Greek and the Turkish Communal Chambers, in deserving and appropriate cases, on such terms and conditions as may be determined by a relevant communal law.” The Constitution of Cyprus clearly states that the right to education is not confined by citizenship; therefore even the children of illegal immigrants are allowed to enroll in Cyprus schools, without meaning that their parents gain any rights through this.²

2. According to Article 28, “1. All persons are equal before the law, the administration and justice and are entitled to equal protection thereof and treatment thereby. 2. Every person shall enjoy all the rights and liberties provided for in this Constitution without any direct or indirect discrimination against any person on the ground of his community, race, religion, language, sex, political or other convictions, national or social descent, birth, colour, wealth, social class, or on any ground whatsoever, unless there is express provision to the contrary in this Constitution.”

3. According to Article 108, “1. The Greek and the Turkish Communities shall have the right to receive subsidies from the Greek or the Turkish Government respectively for institutions of education, (...) belonging to the Greek or the Turkish Community respectively. 2. Also where either the Greek or the Turkish Community considers that it has not the necessary number of schoolmasters, professors or clergymen for the functioning of its institutions, such Community shall have the right to obtain and employ such personnel to the extent strictly necessary to meet its needs as the Greek or the Turkish Government respectively may provide.”

Legislative framework:

¹ <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/portal/portal.nsf/All/C44572D7363776ACC2256EBD004F3BB3?OpenDocument>

² Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).

4. Compulsory education and school attendance: According to Law 24(I) of 1993 “Law Providing for the Compulsory Tuition and the Provision of Primary and Secondary Education Free of Charge”, education is considered as a basic human right and as such it is provided free of charge and is compulsory from the age of 4 years and 8 months to the age of 15 years.³
5. The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Cyprus was founded under Law 12 of 1965. According to this Law, pre-primary, primary, secondary, and some sections of post-secondary education are under the authority of the Ministry of Education.
6. Almost all aspects of primary education are covered by the Regulations 223 of 1997 concerning the functioning of public primary schools.

Non-discrimination and gender equality:

7. Children with special needs: Several laws and regulations were adopted regarding the education of children with special needs (the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law No. 113; Regulations 185/2001 and 186/2001 regarding the Mechanisms for Early Detection of Children with Special Needs and regarding the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs, which support the application of the Law.) In order to implement these instruments, the Ministry of Education and Culture has enforced various programmes for special education to meet the educational/other needs of school children. For instance, during the academic year 2005/2006, nine special schools assumed the education of 319 pupils with serious needs, and individual help was provided for 2,624 children attending mainstream primary classes and to 1,713 children attending secondary schools (lower, upper secondary and technical vocational). Additionally, special units were established in ordinary schools for 263 children with moderate needs. The needs of these children were satisfied by well qualified teachers with a variety of specialties (teachers for intellectual, emotional and other problems, the deaf, the blind, special gymnastics, music therapy, work therapy, speech therapy, educational psychology, audiology and physiotherapy).⁴
8. Students with special needs: According to Law No. 47/79 on Special Education, the government has undertaken responsibility for the education of children with special needs between the ages of 5 and 18 years. This Law has been replaced by Law 113 of 1999 on Education and Training of Children with Special Needs (age group 3-18 years), Regulation 185 of 2001 regarding the mechanisms for early detection of children with special needs, and Regulation 186 of 2001 regarding the education and training of children with special needs which support the application of the Law. The above mentioned legal framework makes it mandatory for every higher education institution to respond to the needs of every student with special needs registered at the institution as regards to his/her education, examinations, housing, psychological support etc.⁵ According to Law 113, Special education and training shall be provided in ordinary

³ Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).

⁴ Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).

⁵ Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).; IBE

school (Article 3 (1)). According to this Law, a central Committee for Special Education and training shall be established (Article 5 (1)). The Law also establishes some mechanism for detection of children who may have special needs and for the information and support of their parents (Article 6 (1)). Any child shall be entitled to attend public school for the provision of the special education and training free of charge (Article 17 (1))

9. Gender Equality: In Cyprus, the curriculum has been revised to address gender parity concerns and, today, both boys and girls study similar subjects and carry out similar activities. Although there is no formal gender-based policy in education, teachers are instructed to address gender parity concerns and to nurture sensitivity on such issues, so that students learn the importance of equality from a very early age. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for implementing reorganization and improvements in the education system, so that all policies, mechanisms and structures will be informed by gender parity concerns. This is a challenging task that requires clearly stated goals, the ability to include training and expertise throughout the process, and the establishment of adequate institutional mechanisms.⁶

10. However, in the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, 4 January 2010, Cyprus was recommended to “Take additional measures to reduce the gender wage gap and further improve the integration of women in employment through measures such as the creation of more childcare facilities and educational facilities for working mothers (Norway).”⁷ The position of Cyprus on this recommendation is not clear.

11. Children from marginalized groups: In Cyprus, the Ministry of Education and Culture has taken specific measures to support education in target areas, including schools in remote rural areas, schools with a lower socio-economic status and education in the occupied areas of the island. These all receive additional support. One of the measures adopted is the creation of Priority Education Areas, which are based on the concept of positive discrimination to ensure prevention of school failure and functional illiteracy. For children from social, cultural and ethnic groups or families that lack favorable conditions for the development and education of their children, the equity of education implies a set of “positive” measures. In addition, children belonging to various religious groups, as well as the Turkish-Cypriot community, receive help from the Government, as the Constitution assures access to education for the members of these groups. These groups are entitled to run their own schools, which are supported financially by the Government, and to receive financial assistance should their children wish to attend a private school of their choice. These children thus have the right to be educated according to their academic potential and their parents’ wishes.⁸

12. However, in the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, 4 January 2010, Cyprus was recommended to “Further ensure political representation of the three religious minority groups and promote their stronger involvement in the planning and

World Data, VI Edition 2006-07, <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fr/dans-le-monde/regions-de-lunesco/europe-et-amerique-du-nord/chypre/profile-of-education.html>

⁶ Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).

⁷ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, 4 January 2010, Recommendation 57, http://www.upr-epu.com/files/142/A_HRC_1_CYP_E.pdf

⁸ Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).

implementation of various projects providing financial assistance for their educational and cultural needs (Armenia).”⁹ The position of Cyprus on this recommendation is not clear.

13. Students from lower income families: Some areas with a disadvantaged pupil population and with high registration and attendance of non-native language speakers operate as “*Zones of Educational Priority*”. The policy of the “*Zones of Educational Priority*” derives from UNESCO’s strategy for positive discrimination, which is the unequal treatment of inequalities, such as the provision of additional resources to vulnerable groups of pupils. Empirical and theoretical research related to minority education and specific educational initiatives have guided the Ministry in developing and implementing programmes for the educational needs of the poor, economically and socially marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as:

- Provision of bilingual teachers who facilitate the communication between teachers, pupils and parents.
- Provision of special support and attention to migrant, refugee and asylum seekers from the Educational Psychology Service and the Social Welfare Services.
- Organisation of a number of intercultural activities and events.
- Organisation of education seminars for parents and legal guardians on a subject matter of their interest based on the distinctive characteristics of each local community in which they reside.

14. Actions taken within the framework of the “*Zones of Educational Priority*” include:

- Lowering the number of pupils per classroom.
- Employment of teachers speaking the mother tongue of foreign language speaking pupils.
- Offer of free breakfast to pupils of kindergartens and primary schools.
- Offer of free meals to underprivileged pupils of kindergartens and primary schools.
- Offer of afternoon activities (groups, clubs) at the gymnasiums included in the Zones.
- Appointment of two teachers in each Zone as coordinators.

Higher Education

15. In order to promote lifelong learning, private Universities either of a profit or non-profit character are established according to the provisions of Law 109(1) of 2005 approved by the House of Parliament of the Republic in July 2005. Private schools operate according to the Private Schools Laws of 1971.¹⁰

16. As regards the operation of private universities, either of a profit or non-profit character, their establishment is stipulated by the provisions of the law (109(I)/2005) referring to the establishment and operation of Public and Private Universities. Furthermore, a separate law

⁹ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, 4 January 2010, Recommendation 55, http://www.upr-epu.com/files/142/A_HRC_1_CYP_E.pdf

¹⁰ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_CY_EN.pdf

provides for the establishment and operation of private institutions of Higher Non University Level Education. All Private Institutions registered in the Republic of Cyprus can submit to the Ministry of Education and Culture applications for the establishment and operation of a Private University. Applications can also be submitted by the owners of existing Private Institutions of Tertiary Education, seeking the upgrade of their Institutions into university status.

17. In December 2002, Law 234(I)/2002 was passed for the establishment of the Open University of Cyprus.¹¹

18. In 2003, the House of Representatives approved the establishment of the Cyprus University of Technology under Law 198(I)/2003.¹²

19. Teachers: Courses to strengthen teachers' competences have been introduced. These included a series of seminars for teachers in all levels of education, Special Education Needs teachers, educational psychologists and other specialists in the area of education on the following topics:

- Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE) for all levels of educational (pre-primary, primary and secondary).
- Intercultural education and education against discrimination.
- Ethnic diversity in a democratic school.
- Gender equality.
- Preventing and facing school bullying.
- Preventing and facing violence in the family.

20. Quality: The establishment and operation of private tertiary-level institutions are regulated by the Unified Laws to regulate the establishment, control and operation of institutions of tertiary education, Laws 67(I) of 1996 up to 193(I) of 2002¹³ and 221(I)/2004, which also concern the establishment of the Council for Educational Evaluation and Accreditation (SEKAP).¹⁴

Policy measures

Major policy measures:

21. Pre-primary education: In September 2004, the Ministry of Education and Culture extended the provision of free and compulsory education to the pre-primary stage for one year.¹⁵

¹¹ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_CY_EN.pdf

¹² http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_CY_EN.pdf

¹³ http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Cyprus/Cyprus_UNIFIED_LAW_1996_2004_EN.pdf

¹⁴ IBE World Data, VI Edition 2006-07, <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fr/dans-le-monde/regions-de-lunesco/europe-et-amerique-du-nord/chypre/profile-of-education.html>

¹⁵ Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).

22. Secondary Education: The State Institutes for Further Education function under the auspices of the Directorate of Secondary Education all over Cyprus. They aim at offering equal opportunities of education to thousands of pupils of all ages and adults and promoting lifelong learning which is a fundamental requirement of the European Union.

23. The State Institutes for Further Education help low income families and offer scholarships to students who excel in their exams. They employ experienced teachers as well as young unemployed teachers. There are 41 State Institutes all over Cyprus and more with more than 17.000 students every year.

24. Higher Education: The Government covers the cost of tuition for all Cypriot and European students studying at Public Institutions of Higher Education in Cyprus, for undergraduate programs, at both university and non-university level (€3,400). Potential students of Higher Education are granted access to Public Universities as well as Public Institutions of Higher Education via the Pancyprian Examinations.

25. A limited number of places (10%) are granted to specific groups of people (such as the disabled due to the acts of war, children of missing persons, and persons living in the North-Eastern part of the island). 3% of the positions are also granted to the handicapped and people with special needs. Students with very serious financial problems may be subsidized by the Student Welfare Fund, which is supported financially by private initiatives. Facilities are also offered by the Immigration Department of the Republic with regard to securing entry visas and stay permits for foreign students.

26. Adult Education: In Cyprus, a special committee was set up to study adult education and make necessary decisions on how to address the issue. This specific institution aims to fight against illiteracy.¹⁶

27. Literacy: From the year 1989-1990, the Literacy Programme is run in all Gymnasia in an effort to address functional literacy and prevent school and social exclusion. The content of the programme focuses on the three basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic) according to the levels of the three first classes of primary education and the needs and experiences of Gymnasium pupils.

28. Quality: Following a report by a Committee of seven academics, which identified the weaknesses of the Cyprus Educational System, an educational reform programme was launched in January 2005. The process of the reform is based on a structured dialogue among all interested stakeholders inviting dialogue among all stakeholders (political parties, teacher unions, parents associations, pupils associations, and the Government, represented by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Planning Bureau). For this purpose, three Councils were set up:

- Council for Primary and Secondary Education: This includes representatives of the Government, teachers, pupils, parents and major political parties and discusses issues of interest to the school system.
- Council for Higher Education: This includes representatives of the Government, the universities and other higher educational institutions, students, parents, bodies responsible

¹⁶ Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).

for quality assessment in higher education and major political parties and discusses issues of interest to higher and tertiary education.

- Education Council: This consists of representatives of the Government and major political parties. It sets the agenda for issues to be addressed within the dialogue, reviews issues which have been discussed at the other two Councils and makes final recommendations to the Government.

29. Human Rights Education: Cyprus provides good examples of ways of implementing human rights education through a democratic teaching style with high student involvement, which enables them to acquire a variety of skills to become active citizens. In Cyprus, education aims to teach students how to collaborate and work effectively in groups to collect, discover, analyze, evaluate and compose information. Furthermore, students are expected to develop their critical and creative thinking skills and become active citizens who are democratic, socially sensitive and respectful of both their own and other cultures and countries.¹⁷

30. In the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, 4 January 2010, Cyprus was recommended to “Strengthen measures to raise awareness and provide information through specific programmes of human rights education and training and to incorporate human rights in school curricula (Morocco)”. The country was also recommended to “Develop a national strategy to include in the school system at all levels appropriate measures in the field of human rights education, in accordance with the Plan of Action 2005-2009 of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (Italy)”.¹⁸ The position of Cyprus on those two recommendations is not clear.

31. The Ministry of Education and Culture, in accordance with the Plan of Action 2005-2009 of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, has undertaken actions which include educational policies (i.e. curricula, training etc.), policy implementation measures (i.e. coordination mechanisms and allocation of resources), learning environment changes (i.e. sharing understanding, respect and responsibility) and opportunities for professional development of teachers. More specifically, the newly-reformed Curriculum encourages personal and social development within a socio-cultural environment that respects human rights, fundamental freedoms and principles (such as equality and non-discrimination). Its rationale is focused on the development of a democratic school, providing opportunities for learners and schools to act as change agents and gain responsibility in practising action competency skills.

32. Vocational and technical education: The establishment of Post-Secondary Institutes for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, in October 2012, has offered learners the opportunity to attend specialized programs at post-secondary level, complementary to the programs offered by the private colleges at affordable cost. The duration of the programs is 14 weeks per semester. The programs include practical training in actual work environments such as industry and/or the business or elsewhere.

¹⁷ Report submitted by Cyprus to UNESCO in 2006 within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering period 2000-2005).

¹⁸ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, 4 January 2010, Recommendations 19, 20, http://www.upr-epu.com/files/142/A_HRC_1_CYP_E.pdf

Cooperation:

33. Cyprus is party to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.
34. Cyprus reported within the framework of the Seventh and Eighth Consultations of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (covering the periods 2000-2005 and 2006-2011). However, it did not report within the framework of the Sixth Consultation of Member States (covering the period 1994-1999).
35. Cyprus did not report within the framework of the Fourth Consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008). It has not yet reported within the framework of the Fifth Consultation of Member States the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation (2013).
36. Cyprus reported within the framework of the First and Second Consultations (1993 and 2011) on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education.
37. Cyprus is not party to the 1989 UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education.

Freedom of opinion and expression

38. Constitutional and Legislative Framework: Cyprus guarantees the freedom of expression and press freedom through Article 19 of its Constitution as well as the 1989 Press Law.
39. Freedom of information law does not exist in Cyprus.
40. Defamation was decriminalized in 2003.
41. Media Self-Regulation: Media self-regulatory mechanisms exist in Cyprus such as through the Cyprus Media Complaints Commission.
42. Safety of Journalists: UNESCO recorded no killing of journalists in Cyprus from 2008-2012.

Right to development and environmental issues

43. With regard to the links between society, development and science, Cyprus transmitted its national submission to UNESCO on the application of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers and took part in the consultations concerning the issue of a possible revision of the 1974 Recommendation discussed currently at UNESCO. In the areas covered by the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers of UNESCO, Cyprus's national legislation is in conformity to the principles laid down in the 1974 Recommendation. In the areas covered by the Recommendation, Cyprus's institutional practices are consistent with the principles laid down in the 1974 Recommendation.

44. Cyprus is member of the Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation System in the North-eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and connected seas (NEAMTWS) created in 2005 under the aegis of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO-IOC).

45. Cyprus through its Geological Survey Department takes part in the regular workshops on Seismicity and Earthquake Engineering in the Extended Mediterranean Region held under the aegis of UNESCO since 1993¹⁹.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Right to education

46. Cyprus should be encouraged to submit state reports for the periodic consultations of UNESCO's education related standard-setting instruments.

47. Cyprus could be encouraged to improve access to education for minorities, especially religious minority groups.

48. Cyprus could be encouraged to intensify its efforts to guarantee effective access to basic education for all.

49. Cyprus could be encouraged to take additional measures towards gender equality and towards the integration of girls and women in education.

Freedom of opinion and expression

50. Cyprus is recommended to adopt a freedom of information law that is in accordance with international standards.

51. UNESCO recommends further development of self-regulatory mechanisms of the media.

¹⁹ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/xxxii_international_workshop_on_seismicity_and_earthquake_engineering_in_the_extended_mediterranean/.