

**Universal Periodic Review (32nd session, January-February 2019)  
Contribution of UNESCO**

**Cyprus**

**I. Background and framework**

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

<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>
<i>Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960</i>	State Party to this Convention (09/06/1970)	Reservation to this Convention shall not be permitted		Right to education
<i>Convention on Technical and Vocational Education 1989</i>	Not a State Party to this Convention			Right to education
<i>Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972</i>	14/08/1975 Acceptance			Right to take part in cultural life
<i>Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003</i>	24/02/2006 Ratification			Right to take part in cultural life
<i>Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005</i>	19/12/2006 Ratification	<i>Declaration of the European Community in application of Article 27(3) (c) of the Convention indicating the competences transferred to the Community by the Member States under the Treaties, in the areas covered by the Convention.</i>		Right to take part in cultural life

## Right to education

### II. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

1. The **Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus of 1960**<sup>1</sup> enshrines the right to education in Article 20, which also states that primary education should be free and compulsory. The Constitution also states that every person shall enjoy the rights enshrined in the Constitution without any direct or indirect discrimination on the ground of his community, race, religion, language, sex, political or other convictions, national or social descent, birth, color, wealth, social class, or on any ground whatsoever. According to **Law 24(I) of 1993**<sup>2</sup> “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.
2. In terms of reporting to UNESCO, Cyprus did not report within the framework of the **9<sup>th</sup> Consultation** (2016-2017) of Member States on the measures taken to implement the UNESCO 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, while it submitted a report during the **8<sup>th</sup> Consultation** (2011-2013). Meanwhile, Cyprus did not report on the measures taken to implement UNESCO 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms for both the **5<sup>th</sup>** (2012-2013) and **6<sup>th</sup>** (2016-2017) **Consultations**.

## Freedom of expression

### ➤ Constitutional and Legislative Framework:

3. The Constitution guarantees the freedom of expression through Articles 19 that every person has the right to freedom of speech and expression in any form. This right includes freedom to hold opinions and receive and impart information and ideas without interference by any public authority and regardless of frontiers.<sup>3</sup>
4. Freedom of press is guaranteed by the 1989 Press Law, which protects the free circulation of newspapers, the right to not reveal sources, and access to official information.<sup>4</sup>
5. No freedom of information law has been adopted in Cyprus.

### ➤ Implementation of legislation:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/1e7bf463b94424c883bad145fbdceabb140806fa.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Cyprus Report submitted within the framework of the Seventh Consultation on the implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (2000-2005), 2006, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.kypros.org/Constitution/English/appendix\\_d\\_part\\_ii.html](http://www.kypros.org/Constitution/English/appendix_d_part_ii.html)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/50895d9326.html>

6. Cyprus Radio-television Authority, established under the Radio and Television Broadcasters Law of 1998, is the sole regulator of broadcasting activities in Cyprus. The Authority comprises seven members who are appointed by the Council of Ministers.<sup>5</sup>

➤ Safety of journalists

7. UNESCO recorded no killings of journalists and media workers in Cyprus since 2008.

### III. UPR Recommendations

8. **Below are the recommendations made within the framework of the 2nd cycle of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (February 2014)<sup>6</sup>:**

**114.28.** *Continue the current momentum, national action plans and programmes for effectively addressing challenges and disparities in health care, education, employment, gender equality and social welfare, especially for vulnerable groups of women, children, the elderly and persons with difficulties in the country*

**114.29.** *Continue efforts to strengthen human rights education in school curricula*

**114.30.** *Continue educational reform and the restructuring of the educational system, particularly paying attention towards raising awareness and education on human rights*

**114.32.** *Intensify efforts to further raise public awareness and education on human rights and further strengthen capacity-building for human rights institutions and law enforcement mechanisms*

**114.36.** *Strengthen public policies aimed at the achievement of gender equality in law and in practice, paying particular attention to the vulnerability of elderly women and women with disabilities and especially with respect to access to education, employment and social services*

**114.44.** *Adopt legislative and practical measures towards ensuring equality and equal opportunity in the fields of employment, education, health care and housing for all ethnic groups*

**114.45.** *Step up efforts to combat and sanction effectively all forms of discrimination and intolerance, as well as to take additional measures to provide a more adequate response and the required support to the educational needs of the minorities*

**114.80.** *Continue the measures aimed at the improvement of the protection, integration and, in particular, access to education of children with disabilities*

**114.81.** *Ensure that children with disabilities are able to exercise their right to education and provide their inclusion in the mainstream education system*

**114.82.** *Ensure that children with disabilities are able to exercise their right to education and provide for their inclusion in the mainstream education system*

**114.83.** *Improve access to education and health for minorities and ensure non-discrimination in access to employment and accommodation for migrants*

### IV. Review and specific recommendations

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.crtatv.org.cy/images/users/1/FINAL%20CONSOLIDATED%20LAW%2016.3.17.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CYIndex.aspx>

9. In the report of the previous UPR cycle, recommendations related to the issue of human rights education, gender equality, inclusive education, equal opportunity and education quality. Cyprus was encouraged to develop new legislation and policy framework to fulfill the above-mentioned objectives.
10. First, through the new **National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2014–2017**, Cyprus made some progress in eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting **gender equality**. In the academic year 2014–2015, the percentages of female students enrolment were: 49% in pre-primary education; 49% in primary education; 49% in lower secondary education; 54% in upper secondary general education; 22% in upper secondary technical education; and 57% in tertiary education. The government also established a Committee to oversee and coordinate all gender equality issues related to actions taken. Despite the efforts, **gender segregation** still exist in technical education where female enrolment constituting only 22% of total enrolment.<sup>7</sup> The same situation also exists in certain fields of study within tertiary education. The concentration of female students in the women-dominated fields and their underrepresentation in technical education still exists. Cyprus should be encouraged to diversify academic choices of female students and improve gender equality.
11. Regarding **inclusive education**, several programs and strategies are implemented. For **minority students**, the Ministry of Education and Culture designed and implemented programmes for the education of Roma and other non-native language speaking students, including provision of bilingual teachers and special support from the Educational Psychology Service and the Social Welfare Service. The Cyprus Educational System also provides teaching of the Armenian and the Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages in schools attended by members of the relevant groups and national minorities.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the Roma (Kurbet) community still face discrimination, as well as challenge of low attendance and high dropout rates.<sup>9</sup> Facing this, Cyprus should be encouraged to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure their adequate and equal access to education. In terms of **school curriculum**, although students or parents have the right to apply for an exemption from attending **religious teachings** other than that of their own religion, students are required to remain in classes in some cases. The lack of information on measures taken to support the religious education of non-orthodox communities, especially in the southern part of the island, also exists.<sup>10</sup>
12. In the same line, a number of amendments to the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law [L.87(I)/2014]<sup>11</sup> and the relevant Regulations R.416/2013 have been enacted in order to further strengthen the rights of **children with disabilities**.<sup>12</sup> However, due to the insufficient level of reasonable accommodation, the

<sup>7</sup> Cyprus, National report submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 28 February 2017, CEDAW/C/CYP/8, para.106-110.

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fCYP%2f8&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fCYP%2f8&Lang=en)

<sup>8</sup> Cyprus, National report submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 23 December 2015, CERD/C/CYP/23-24, para.33, 98.

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCYP%2f23-24&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCYP%2f23-24&Lang=en)

<sup>9</sup> Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Concluding Observations, 12 May 2017, CERD/C/CYP/CO/23-24, para.18.

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f23-24&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f23-24&Lang=en)

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations, 30 April 2015, CCPR/C/CYP/CO/4, para. 19.

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki\\_ekpaidefsi/nomothesia/peri\\_agogis\\_kanonismoi\\_2001\\_186\\_2001.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/eidiki_ekpaidefsi/nomothesia/peri_agogis_kanonismoi_2001_186_2001.pdf) (2001 Version)

<sup>12</sup> Cyprus, National report submitted to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 15 October 2014, E/C.12/CYP/6, para.200.

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCYP%2f6&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCYP%2f6&Lang=en)

children with disabilities still face difficulties. Segregated education remains rooted in the education system, which is also frequently reflected by the attitudes of teachers and other relevant professionals,<sup>13</sup> while the definition of inclusive education in domestic laws is not fully compliant with international norms.<sup>14</sup> Cyprus should be encouraged to ensure further adequate access to education for students with disabilities, promote their full participation in schools and review the legal definition of inclusive education with a view to bringing it into line with international norms.

13. Regarding **human rights education**, the Ministry of Education and Culture has undertaken specific actions to incorporate human rights in school curriculum, including educational policies, policy-implementation measures and the professional development of teachers.<sup>15</sup> The curriculums of “Diversity and inter-culturalism” and “Human rights” began in 2014 and aimed to empower students to identify and confront both “hidden” and “obvious” racism. Besides, in the same year, the Ministry of Education and Culture participated as a partner in the Pilot Project Scheme “Human rights and democracy in action” of the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The project assessed the instructional as well as the educational methodology through which controversial issues and topics are taught in classrooms, especially topics on/related to **racial discrimination**.<sup>16</sup> To **eliminate discrimination**, the Educational Psychology Service provided psychological assessments and counselling interviews to students, from 3 to 18 years old, presenting trends that could give rise to racial segregation. These assessments were designed to ensure proper monitoring and prevent multiple discrimination based on low income, race, colour, descent, national origin, sexual orientation or special educational needs.<sup>17</sup>
14. An important concern relates to the **significant decrease in public spending**, particularly in several areas including education, under fiscal consolidation measures.<sup>18</sup> The action of reducing public expense could result in negative influence and damage the enjoyment of right to education. Cyprus should be encouraged to increase the budget and restore it previous level of public service.
15. Regarding **basic skill and literacy**, literacy rates for persons who are above fifteen-year-old are very high in Cyprus (99%, Population Census, 2011). The adult education centers provide general adult education within the framework of offering **lifelong learning opportunities**. The main objective of it is the general development of every adult’s personality, as well as the development of citizens and society in general.<sup>19</sup>

➤ **Specific recommendations:**

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<sup>13</sup> Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Concluding Observations, 8 May 2017, CRPD/C/CYP/CO/1, para. 49. [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en)

<sup>14</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, 28 October 2016, E/C.12/CYP/CO/6, para. 41. [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCYP%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fCYP%2fCO%2f6&Lang=en)

<sup>15</sup> Cyprus, National report submitted to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 15 October 2014, E/C.12/CYP/6, para.172.

<sup>16</sup> Cyprus, National report submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 23 December 2015, CERD/C/CYP/23-24, para.115, 119.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. para.42.

<sup>18</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations, 28 October 2016, E/C.12/CYP/CO/6, para. 11

<sup>19</sup> Cyprus, National report submitted to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 15 October 2014, E/C.12/CYP/6, para.190-191.

1. Cyprus should be encouraged to ensure the right to education and full participation of students with disabilities. The definition of inclusive education should comply with international norms.
2. Cyprus should be encouraged to develop comprehensive strategies to ensure the right to education of students from minority groups.
3. Cyprus should be encouraged to increase the public expense of education.
4. Cyprus should be encouraged to continue to develop comprehensive strategies to diversify the academic choices of female student and improve gender equality.
5. Cyprus should be encouraged to continue the implementation of human rights education into its education curriculum and materials.
6. Cyprus should be strongly encouraged to submit state reports for the periodic consultations on UNESCO's education-related standard-setting instruments, and notably on the Convention against Discrimination in Education.
7. Cyprus should be encouraged to share with UNESCO any relevant information to update its country profile on UNESCO's Global Observatory on the Right to Education.<sup>20</sup>

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### **Freedom of opinion and expression**

16. The Government is encouraged to introduce a freedom of information law in accordance with international standards.
17. The Government is encouraged to assess the appointment system for the broadcast licensing authority to ensure that this body is independent.

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### **Right to culture**

18. As a State Party to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)<sup>21</sup>, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)<sup>22</sup> and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)<sup>23</sup>, Cyprus is encouraged to fully implement the relevant provisions that promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Cyprus is encouraged to give due consideration to the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young peoples and peoples with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/index.php?action=countries&lng=en>

<sup>21</sup> Periodic Report available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/862>

<sup>22</sup> Periodic Report available at: <http://ich.unesco.org/doc/download.php?versionID=33119>

<sup>23</sup> Periodic Report available at: <http://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/periodic-reports/cyprus-2016-report>

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**Freedom of scientific research and the right to benefit  
from scientific progress and its applications**

19. Cyprus has not submitted its National Report on the implementation of the Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers (1974) for the Second Consultation covering the period from 2013 to 2016 (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002592/259256e.pdf>). Therefore Cyprus is encouraged to report to UNESCO in future on the implementation of the revised 1974 Recommendation, which is now entitled Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017), on any legislative or other steps undertaken by it with the aim to ensure the application of this international standard-setting instrument, paying particular attention to the legal provisions and regulatory frameworks which ensure the implementation of human rights of scientific researchers, as well as human rights obligations related to the Right to Science, the principle of non-discrimination, including urging active promotion of women and girls entering scientific careers, as well as scientists' rights of autonomy, freedom of research, expression and publication.