



# COUNTRY FACTSHEET: CYPRUS 2012

## EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

### 1. Introduction

This EMN Country Factsheet provides a factual overview of the main policy developments in migration and international protection in Cyprus during 2012, including latest statistics. It has been prepared in conjunction with the European Commission's 4th Annual Report on Migration and Asylum (2012).

### 2. Legal Migration and Mobility

#### 2.1. PROMOTING LEGAL MIGRATION CHANNELS

**A bill concerning the revision of fees for submitting an application for legal migration purposes** was prepared and submitted to the House of Representatives. The bill aims at simplifying and reducing fees for certain groups, such as elderly people and people supported by the state.

#### 2.2. ECONOMIC MIGRATION

Due to the economic crisis and the high unemployment, legislation regarding the employment of third country nationals has been adjusted and thus **restrictions in admissions** have been introduced for some occupations (e.g. nurses, care takers, bakers, and unskilled workers in wholesale). The implementation of these measures resulted in a reduction of 6% of the number of foreign workers (from 6,657 to 6,231).

The **EU Blue Card Directive** (2009/50/EC) was transposed into national legislation in 2012. Debates took place at the House of Representatives where several issues were discussed concerning the volumes of admission of skilled and highly skilled workers. It was decided that the volumes of admission will be set to zero for the present time due to the on-going economic crisis.

#### 2.3. FAMILY REUNIFICATION

There were no developments in this area in 2012.

#### 2.4. INTEGRATION

The **implementation of the national action plan on integration** of immigrants was completed on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012. Local authorities implemented general integration programmes as well as programmes targeting specific nationalities. Activities financed by the European Integration Fund (EIF) included child care for afternoon hours, Greek language courses, production of a documentary and other multicultural events.

On 20<sup>th</sup> November 2012, within the framework of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Ministry of Interior hosted an **Experts' Conference on Integration of Immigrants**. The well-attended meeting of around 100 delegates focused on the role of local and regional authorities and communities in shaping and implementing integration policies.

#### 2.5 MANAGING MIGRATION AND MOBILITY<sup>1</sup>

With regard to visa policy, Schengen governance and border monitoring, there were no new developments in 2012.

In the context of Frontex cooperation, the Department of Immigration Passport Control at Larnaca Airport participated in the **"Focal Point Air" operation** organised by Frontex. The operation aimed at exchanging information and experience of seconded national experts with regard to control at the air borders.

Another development in the field of launching operations initiated by Frontex Agency was the **operation "Akritas"**, which consisted by "mobile units" for debriefing purposes and evidence collection. Within the framework of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Ministry of Interior hosted in Nicosia on 30-31 October the **11th Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Conference of Immigration and**

<sup>1</sup> "Managing migration and mobility" refers to the following themes: visa policy, Schengen governance and border monitoring.

**Management of Migratory Flows between Asia and Europe.** The meeting was attended by 63 delegates from 30 ASEM members. The conference demonstrated the extent of the challenges related to managing highly skilled migration, while delegations recognised its importance in tackling skill shortages, fostering innovation and potential for job creation. It was acknowledged that migration of the highly skilled workers and student mobility are fundamental elements of economic growth and regional competitiveness, a challenge currently faced by both European and Asian countries.

### 3. International Protection and Asylum

The **completion of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)** by the end of 2012 was a priority for the Cyprus Presidency during the second half of 2012. Cyprus Presidency focused on pending issues for the CEAS completion, such as differences in legislative texts as well as completion of negotiations with the European Parliament. In addition, during the Cyprus Presidency a political agreement between the Council and the European Parliament has been achieved on the **Directive on Reception Conditions and the Dublin Regulation**. Progress has also been achieved on the negotiations with the European Parliament on the **Asylum Procedures Directive** and an agreement has been reached within the Council in reference to the **EURODAC Regulation**.

With regard to the **European Asylum Support Office (EASO)**, the Asylum Service of the Ministry of Interior deployed a number of officers as experts for drafting training modules, for training purposes and for updating current modules. Furthermore, in the framework of the **Operation Plan in Greece**, the Asylum Service provided a number of experts who played a significant role in the establishment of asylum procedures and institutions, as well as in the capacity building with regards to reception.

**Actions financed and implemented under the European Refugee Fund (ERF)** comprised the provision of accommodation and support services at the Kofinou reception centre as well as the provision of Greek language courses for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

Regarding legislative amendments, Cyprus is in the process of **amending the Refugee Law**. The pending amendments concern the following issues:

- a) Restriction of asylum seekers' and refugees' rights on residence and movement only to the Government controlled areas;
- b) Determination of the responsible authority for the examination of subsequent applications;
- c) Transfer of the representation tasks of unaccompanied minors from the Commissioner for Children's Rights to the Social Welfare Services;

- d) Ensuring the right of beneficiaries of international protection to appeal a negative decision following an application for family reunification; and
- e) Authorising the disclosure of information for purposes of criminal investigation and prosecution.

### 4. Unaccompanied Minors and other Vulnerable Groups

With regards to the issue of the different interpretation on the representation of unaccompanied minors during the asylum procedure, **a new amendment of the Refugees Law** was proposed during 2012 before the House of Representatives. According to the proposal, the Social Welfare Services will replace the Commissioner of the Rights of the Child and will be responsible for representing the unaccompanied child during the examination of the asylum application. The amendment was agreed by the House of Representatives in December 2012 and was enacted in the Refugee Law in January 2013.

### 5. Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings

The **Amending Law on the fight against Trafficking in Human Beings** came into force in March 2012. The latter provides for; *inter alia*, an increase in the number of NGOs participating in the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG) against trafficking in human beings (THB).

A number of events and training related to THB were organised in 2012. A **competition with a prize** for the preparation of posters and a logo for the MCG to be used in campaigns, in cooperation with universities, colleges and schools took place between September 2011 and May 2012.

**A seminar organised by the Cyprus Supreme Court and the American Embassy on trafficking in human beings** addressed to judges, took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012. The seminar emphasised on the importance of expert witnesses during court procedures.

**Training seminars** were also delivered to the Counsels of the Republic and to the Social Welfare Officers focused on victim's behaviour and trauma.

A series of **intergovernmental training sessions** is planned for the year 2013 for different groups of civil servants such as: labour inspectors, immigration officers, local authorities, doctors, psychologists, consular officers, teachers, welfare officers.

The Ministry of Education and Culture distributed to the teaching staff the **booklet "You are not for Sale"** in May 2012. Furthermore, a series of seminars has been held by the Ministry of Education and Culture for teachers.

Members of the Cyprus Police took part in **training programs on trafficking in human beings organised by CEPOL** as well as in the Regional

Seminars for THB to Eastern Europe, organised by the initiative of the French Government.

On 4-5 December 2012 the Council of Europe in collaboration with the Bulgarian National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings organised an international expert conference entitled "**Making Prevention Work: Addressing the Root Causes of Human Trafficking in Europe**" in Sofia, Bulgaria. The aim of the conference was to share experiences and encourage debate on various aspects of prevention of trafficking in human beings, with an emphasis on a comprehensive, human rights-based approach and international partnerships.

In order to improve the available statistics on trafficking in human beings and establish standardised forms for the collection of comparable statistical data, Cyprus along with Portugal, Austria and Bulgaria received a grant by the EU in April 2012 to establish the **project "Towards a Pan-European Monitoring System of Trafficking in Human Beings"**. The main objective of the project is to provide the participating countries with an efficient monitoring system (in the framework of best practices regarding the harmonization of procedures for the collection, treatment, analysis and sharing of information).

## 6. External Dimension of EU Migration Policy

There were no policy developments in this area in 2012.

## 7. Irregular Migration

During 2012, there were a number of developments in relation to irregular migration and return. The **Joint Police Operation "Aphrodite"** took place from 22<sup>th</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and representatives from 28 Member States and Schengen associated countries participated in the operation. The objective of the operation was the collection of information from all participant countries relating to illegal migration such as: the country of origin of illegal immigrant, main routes followed, modus operandi, means of transportation used, use of false documents and indications of smuggling.

Regarding legislation, the **Employer Sanctions Directive** was transposed into the Aliens and Immigration Law in 2012.<sup>2</sup>

In the area of **return**, the Ombudswoman was assigned to deal with the institutionalisation and operation of a forced return monitoring system.

A Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the **International**

**Organization for Migration (IOM)** was signed in December 2012. Under the Agreement, IOM will open an office in Cyprus which will implement a number of migration-related programmes in the domain of capacity building, advisory services and technical cooperation on migration issues.

**A guide with information on voluntary return** for persons from India, Pakistan and Philippines was developed and financed under the European Return Fund. An organised flight for forced return also took place given that a significant number of individual forced returns were co-funded by the Return Fund. Furthermore, experts from other EU Member States have been seconded to Cyprus and trained by Cyprus Immigration Officers on issues such as the identification of false/falsified documents and evidence collection in order to achieve the return of migrants.

## 8. Provision and Exchange of Information to support Policy Development

In the context of the **Polish-Danish-Cypriot trio** held in the EU Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second semester of 2012, the relevant ministries in the area of asylum, migration, integration and borders of the three Member States decided to set up a formalised trio cooperation and coordination and to meet regularly.

On 29-30 October 2012, the **EMN Conference 2012** with the overall theme, "**International Students**", was organised within the framework of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU according to the priorities of the Presidency. The conference served to inform the development of a proposal amending the Students (2004/114/EC) and Researchers (2005/71/EC) Directives. The conference also raised awareness about the work of the EMN and engaged with a wider audience of policymakers and practitioners at EU and national levels. The conference also aimed to highlight and create synergies with the work of other EU and National institutions and agencies relevant to the theme.

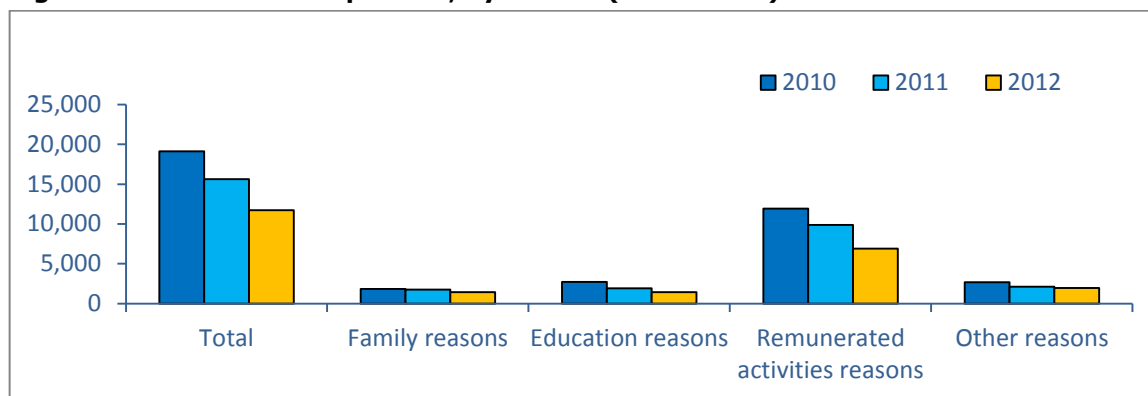
### STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Cyprus on aspects of migration and asylum (2010-2012), including residence, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics are not yet available, this is indicated in the Annex as "N/A".

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2009/52/EC providing minimum standards on sanctions and measures against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals

## Statistical Annex: Immigration and Asylum in Cyprus (2010-2012)

**Figure 1: First residence permits, by reason (2010-2012)**



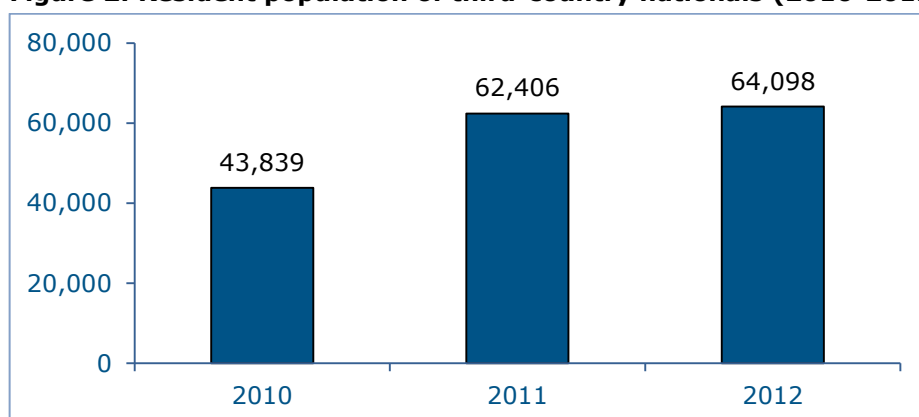
Source: Eurostat (*migr\_resfirst*)

**Table 1: First residence permits: Top 5 nationalities (2010-2012)**

2010	2011	2012
<b>1. Vietnam</b> – 2,899	<b>1. Philippines</b> – 2,763	<b>1. Philippines</b> – 2,150
<b>2. Philippines</b> – 2,745	<b>2. Sri Lanka</b> – 2,363	<b>2. Russia</b> – 1,862
<b>3. Sri Lanka</b> – 2,183	<b>3. Russia</b> – 2,113	<b>3. Sri Lanka</b> – 1,702
<b>4. Russia</b> – 2,009	<b>4. India</b> – 1,130	<b>4. India</b> – 1,015
<b>5. India</b> – 1,238	<b>5. Vietnam</b> – 1,045	<b>5. Egypt</b> – 721

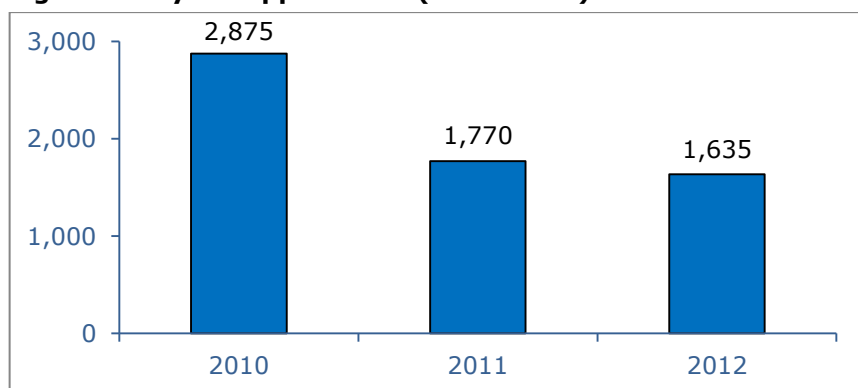
Source: Eurostat migration statistics (*migr\_resfirst*)

**Figure 2: Resident population of third-country nationals (2010-2012)**



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (*migr\_pop1ctz*)

**Figure 3: Asylum applications (2010-2012)**



Source: Eurostat migration statistics (*migr\_asyappctza*)

**Table 2: Asylum applications: Top 5 nationalities (2010-2012)**

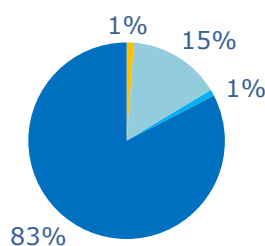
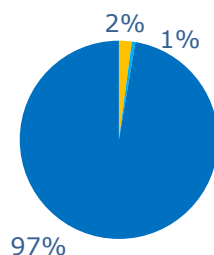
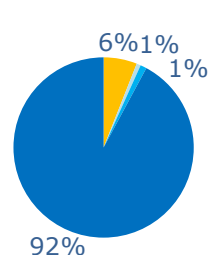
2010	2011	2012
1. Iraq - 340	1. Vietnam - 210	1. Syria - 565
2. India - 320	2. Egypt - 185	2. Vietnam - 200
3. Vietnam - 225	3. Syria - 185	3. Bangladesh - 290
4. Egypt - 210	4. Bangladesh - 180	4. Egypt - 155
5. Sri Lanka - 185	5. Pakistan - 150	5. Pakistan - 110

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr\_asyappctza)

**Table 3: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2010-2012)**

	Total decisions	Positive decisions	Of which:			Negative decisions
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian reasons	
2010	2,440	425	30	370	25	2,015
2011	2,630	70	55	0	15	2,560
2012	1,335	105	80	10	15	1,230

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr\_asydcfsta)

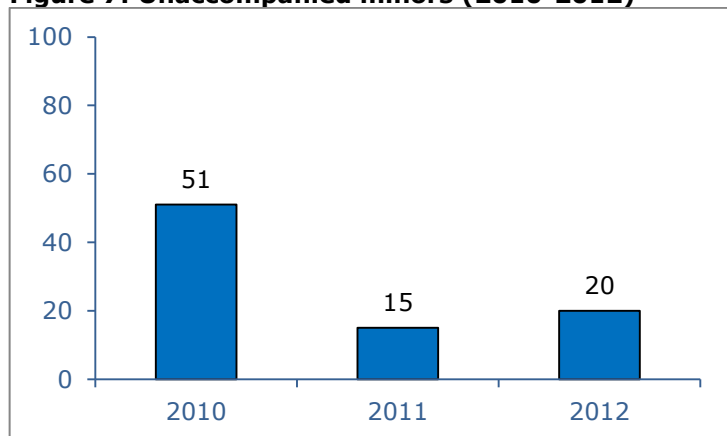
**Figures 4-6: Asylum applications - First instance decisions by outcome (2010-2012)****2010****2011****2012**

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr\_asydcfsta)

**Table 4: Third-country nationals relocated and resettled (2011-2012)**

	2010	2011	2012
Third-country nationals relocated	N/A	N/A	0
Third-country nationals resettled	N/A	N/A	0

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr\_asyresa)

**Figure 7: Unaccompanied minors (2010-2012)**

Source: National contributions to EMN Annual Policy Report

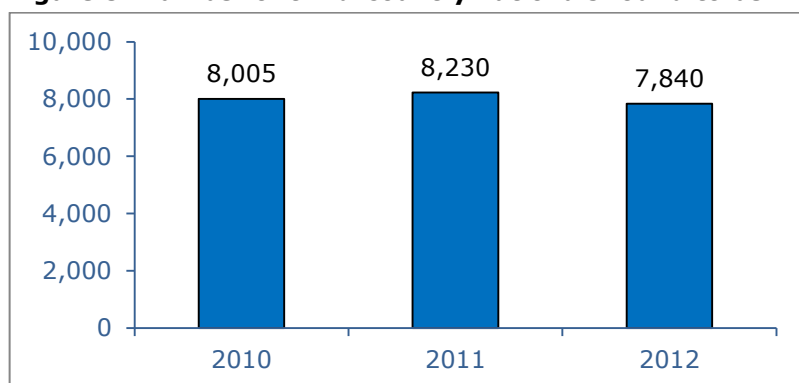
**Table 5: Unaccompanied minors (2010-2012)**

	2010	2011	2012
<b>Unaccompanied minors (total)</b>	51	15	20
<b>Unaccompanied minors not applying for asylum</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants</b>	35	15	25

**Table 6: Number of third-country nationals refused entry at external borders (2010 -2012)**

	2010	2011	2012
<b>Third-country nationals refused entry at external borders</b>	685	575	545

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr\_eirfs)

**Figure 8: Number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present (2010 -2012)**

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr\_eipre)

**Table 7: Third-country nationals returned (2010-2012)**

	Third-country nationals ordered to leave	Returned as part of forced return measures	Returned voluntarily	Returned through an Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
<b>2010</b>	2,845	3,097	966	N/A
<b>2011</b>	4,605	3,500	795	0
<b>2012</b>	N/A	3,192	1,135	49

Source: Eurostat migration statistics (migr\_eiord) and National contributions to EMN Annual Policy Report

**Table 8: Number of visas issued by type (2010-2011)**

	2010	2011	2012
<b>Total visas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Schengen visa (short-stay visas)*</b>	55,128	N/A	N/A
<b>National visa</b>	N/A	51,290	N/A

Source: Commission Staff Working Documents on the Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum; \* DG HOME Statistics on Visa Policy website: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm)