20

CYPRUS

Kalliope Agapiou-Josephides

Figure 20.1 Map of Cyprus
Table 20.1 Cyprus profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU entry year</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schengen entry year</td>
<td>Non-member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEPs elected in 2009</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEPs under Lisbon Treaty</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Nicosia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area*</td>
<td>9,251 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>858,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Cypriots including Armenians, Maronites and Latins; foreigners</td>
<td>75.9 Greek Cypriots including Armenians, Maronites and Latins; 23.4 foreigners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density**</td>
<td>93.5/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of population</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political system</td>
<td>Presidential Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of state</td>
<td>Demetris Christophias, Progressive People’ s Party (AKEL) (February 2008–February 2013); Nikos Anastasiades, Democratic Rally (DISY) (February 2013–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of government</td>
<td>Demetris Christophias, Progressive People’ s Party (AKEL) (February 2008–February 2013); Nikos Anastasiades, Democratic Rally (DISY) (February 2013–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political majority</td>
<td>Coalition Government: Progressive People’ s Party (AKEL) (February 2008–February 2013); Democratic Party (DIKO) (February 2008–August 2011); Social Democratic Movement (EDEK) (February 2008–February 2010); Coalition Government: Democratic Rally (DISY) (February 2013–); Democratic Party (DIKO) (February 2013–February 2014); European Party (EVROKO) (February 2013–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency</td>
<td>Previously Cyprus Pound Euro (€) since 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohead GDP in PPS</td>
<td>20,500 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes:
* Total area including inland waters.
** Population density: the ratio of the annual average population of a region to the land area of the region.

1 Geographical position

Located in the Eastern Mediterranean, at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and Asia, Cyprus occupies an important geographical, geopolitical and geostrategic position. It represents the third smallest Member State of the European Union (EU), after Malta and Luxembourg and the third biggest island in the Mediterranean Sea, after Sicily and Sardinia.

2 Historical background

Cyprus gained its independence from the British Empire in 1960, in the wider context of the decolonization process, on the basis of the Zurich and London Agreements of the 11 and 19 February 1959, respectively. The country experienced a rather hazardous state-building process and remains, to this date, a divided polity and society. The conflict between its two communities in the early 1960s, the coup d’état by the Greek junta, and the Turkish military intervention
that followed in 1974, marked the country’s twisting path towards independence, peace, and security. Over the years, the centrifugal rather than centripetal dynamics of the Greek and Turkish communities led to its division and created a series of multi-fold deadlocks that have resisted time, efforts, and generations. Cyprus features among a cluster of ‘intractable international conflicts’ (Michael, 2007). The country is still in search of its reunification and ‘une synthèse républicaine’ (Agapiou-Josephides, 2010). Cyprus joined the EU in 2004, adopted the euro in 2008, and held the EU Council rotating presidency for the first time in 2012.

3 Geopolitical profile

Cyprus has a unique and strategic geopolitical location, which has greatly determined its troubled historical destiny. Based on Alain Blondy’s definition, Cyprus can definitely be considered as a ‘fragile historical zone’ at a crossroad between East and West.

During the Cold War, it was an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement, which it left in 2004 upon joining the European Union. Cyprus participates in the multilateral political dialogues of the EU and it has been a member of the United Nations, of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and of the Council of Europe. It also coordinates its commercial positions with the EU within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is an active proponent of regional cooperation in the Mediterranean basin and it strives to contribute to the regional stability in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The Arab Spring of 2011 enhanced the geopolitical relevance of Cyprus, including the role of the British Sovereign Areas (SBA) in terms of the control of shipping routes for oil, and potential checkpoints. The recent discovery of hydrocarbons in the country’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) has further enhanced the country’s geopolitical and geostrategic position and placed Cyprus on Europe’s energy map (Drevet, 2011 and 2013).

4 Overview of the political landscape

Since its foundation in the post-colonial era, the internal division of Cyprus has constantly overshadowed its political landscape (Agapiou-Josephides, 2010). The Republic of Cyprus has a presidential system. Although its constitutional and legal order is complex and difficult to describe (Rumpf, 1998), it is commonly agreed that the President stands at the apex of the executive within the political system (Ker-Lindsay, 2008; Ker-Lindsay and Faustmann, 2008).

Since 2004, popular and elite debates in Cyprus have focussed on EU membership and on the 2004 United Nations Plan for the Settlement of the Cyprus Problem (Palley, 2005; Hannay, 2005; Agapiou-Josephides and Rossetto, 2006). Subsequently, discourse evolved around the 2012 EU Council presidency and the discovery of hydrocarbons in the EEZ. In early 2013, the debt crisis was added to the agenda, setting the framework for a critical juncture in terms of people’s attitude towards European integration. The Eurogroup’s bail-in/bail-out method sparked controversies, as its flawed structure and working methods hindered national ‘ownership’ and compromised transparency and accountability. Nils Muižnieks, the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights, warned about the risks and threats that the debt crisis posed to human rights protection: the ‘crisis affects human rights across the board, not only social and economic rights but also many civil and political rights’ and that it ‘affects the most vulnerable disproportionately’ (Financial Times, 8 October 2012). Yet, forces opposing EU-imposed rigid economic policies and austerity do not necessarily oppose the EU integration process, at least to date.
5 Brief account of the political parties

Political parties play a prominent role, to the extent that the political system of Cyprus can be considered as a typical example of ‘partitocracy’. Yet, in a context of general disaffection towards political institutions, political parties score extremely low on the citizens’ trust scale.

Two major parties dominate the political stage in the Republic of Cyprus, while smaller parties function as coalition partners or sources of parliamentary support in order to create a working majority. Over the years, the Cypriot contemporary party system has undergone significant transformations, mainly due to internal fragmentation, strong bipolarization, and the Europeanization process (Christophorou, 2006).

Despite the fact that Cyprus enjoys a multiparty bipolar system, mainly due to its electoral system of proportional representation, over the last decades, the political stage has been dominated by three major parties: AKEL-New Powers (Progressive Party of the Working People–Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα του Εργαζόμενου Λαού–Νέες Δυνάμεις), the Cypriot Communist party, which is the country’s oldest political formation, and DISY (Democratic Rally – Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός), the Conservative party.

Two other well-established political parties are DIKO (Democratic Party – Δημοκρατικό Κόμμα) and Movement of Social Democrats EDEK (Movement of Social Democrats EDEK – Κίνημα Σοσιαλδημοκρατών ΕΔΕΚ – Ενιαία Δημοκρατική Ένωση Κέντρου). Proportional representation also allows small parties to be represented. Since the 2011 legislative election, six political parties sit in Parliament: the four parties mentioned above and two smaller ones: EVROKO (European Party – Ευρωπαϊκό Κόμμα) and the Cyprus Green Party, KOP (Movement of Ecologists and Environmentalists – Κίνημα Οικολόγων – Περιβαλλοντιστών). The Nationalist party ELAM (National Popular Front – Εθνικό Λαϊκό Μέτωπο) made its first electoral appearance in 2011, but did not win a seat, as it failed to reach the threshold of 1.8 per cent.

Table 20.2a List of Greek Cypriot political parties in Cyprus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original name</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενου Λαού (Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενου Λαού)</td>
<td>AKEL</td>
<td>Progressive People’s Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δημοκρατικό Κόμμα (Δημοκρατικό Κόμμα)</td>
<td>DIKO</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός (Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός)</td>
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<td>Democratic Rally</td>
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<td>Εθνικό Λαϊκό Μέτωπο (Εθνικό Λαϊκό Μέτωπο)</td>
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<td>National Popular Front</td>
</tr>
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<td>EDI</td>
<td>United Democrats</td>
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<td>EVROKO</td>
<td>European Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Κίνημα Οικολόγων-Περιβαλλοντιστών (Οικολόγων Περιβαλλοντιστών)</td>
<td>KOP</td>
<td>Cyprus Green Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Κίνημα Σοσιαλδημοκρατών (Κίνημα Σοσιαλδημοκρατών)</td>
<td>EDEK</td>
<td>Social Democratic Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Νέοι Ορίζοντες (Νέοι Ορίζοντες)</td>
<td>New Horizons</td>
<td></td>
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Table 20.2b List of Turkish Cypriot political parties in Cyprus

<table>
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<th>Original name</th>
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<th>English translation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi</td>
<td>CTP</td>
<td>Republican Turkish Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demokrat Parti</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulusal Birlik Partisi</td>
<td>UBP</td>
<td>National Unity Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baış ve Demokrasi Hareketi</td>
<td>BDH</td>
<td>Peace and Democracy Movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the Turkish Cypriot side, the main political parties, in terms of electoral strength, are the CTP (Republican Turkish Party – Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi), a left-wing party, the two Conservative parties UBP (National Unity Party – Ulusal Birlik Partisi) and DP (Democratic Party – Demokrat Parti), and BDH (Peace and Democracy Movement – Baış ve Demokrasi Hareketi).

The electoral system consists of a mitigated proportional representation, with an electoral barrier set at 5 per cent. As a result, many small parties emerge from time to time and then either disappear from the political landscape, or merge with other political forces.

5.1 Party attitude towards the European Union

Political parties’ stance towards the European Union has evolved over time. The divided character of the country’s polity and society has proved to be an idiosyncratic and decisive factor in shaping divergent Europhile and/or Eurosceptic patterns observed across political formations in each one of the island’s communities. Nested opposition to the European integration of Greek Cypriot political parties is to be found on the left and that of the Turkish Cypriot on the right of the ideological spectrum. Since 2004, Euroscepticism has incrementally become more dependent on policy orientation and/or outcome, while at the same time it has operated a shift from the ideological to the strategic (Agapiou-Josephides, 2011).

At first, European integration was perceived as a positive project aimed at achieving peace and prosperity in Western Europe. As such, it has exercised a certain charm on both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, who are still in search of their own country’s unity in diversity. After accession, a number of critical junctures are incrementally changing this perception. The EU’s support to the controversial Annan Plan, for a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem, has contributed to the expansion of Euroscepticism/Eurocriticism, which now includes, beyond Communists, disillusioned intellectuals and active citizens among the Greek Cypriot Community. The March 2013 troika initial decision to operate a ‘hair-cut’ on citizens’ savings, even below 100,000 euro, played an important role in enhancing Eurosceptic trends. To date, there is no call for ending EU membership, but rather a claim for a European Union that is back on track.

5.1.1 Greek Cypriot political party attitude towards the European Union

DISY (Democratic Rally-Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός) is a right-wing party that, since its creation in 1976, has been strongly in favour of the EU. The party has always held a clear pro-European stance, both on ideological and strategic considerations. In 1994, DISY joined the European People’s Party (EPP). Since the first European Parliament election, its MEPs have joined the EPP in the European Parliament. DISY elected two MEPs, both in 2004 and in 2009.

AKEL-New Powers (Progressive Party of the Working People-New Powers – Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα του Εργαζόμενου Λαού-Νέες Δυνάμεις), the Cypriot Communist party and main coalition party supporting President Vassiliou initially, displayed a somewhat hard, though rhetorical, ideological Euroscepticism. Indeed, AKEL did not prevent President Vassiliou from submitting
an accession application, while keeping its Eurosceptic stance. AKEL re-evaluated its position in 1995 and accepted EU membership, on the grounds of facilitating a solution to the Cyprus problem (18th AKEL Congress, 16-19/11/1995). After the election of its Secretary General, Demetris Christofias, to the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus in 2008, the party adopted a soft or constructive Eurocriticism on ideological and strategic grounds. Its counterpart at the European Parliament is the Confederal Group of the European United Left-Nordic Green Left. AKEL managed to secure two representatives in the 2004 and 2009 EP elections.

DIKO (Democratic Party – Δημοκρατικό κόμμα) is a centre-right pro-Europe party. The party elected one MEP in 2004 and in 2009, but initially witnessed some difficulties as to which ideological family it should join within the EP. In 2004, the only DIKO MEP joined the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group (ALDE/ADLE) whilst in 2009 its member chose to enter the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.

EDEK (Movement of Social Democrats EDEK – Κίνημα Σοσιαλδημοκρατών-ΕΔΕΚ) is a strong supporter of the European integration project and it has developed a close and early cooperation with the party of European Socialists. Due to its pro-European stance, it pioneered in establishing and developing close links with its counterparts in the EU well before accession. EDEK failed to elect an MEP in 2004 and succeed in electing one in 2009.

EVROKO (European Party – Ευρωπαϊκό Κόμμα) is a right-wing party with a general positive stance with regard to the European integration process, both in economic and political terms. Its counterpart at the European level is the European Democratic Party (EDP). The party has not yet managed to elect an MEP.

The Movement of Ecologists and Environmentalists, Kinima Oikologon-Perivallontiston (Κίνημα Οικολόγων-Περιβαλλοντιστών) is the Cyprus Green Party. The party has a pro-European stance and is a member of the European Greens. To this date, it has failed to obtain any representative within the EP.

ELAM (National Popular Front – Εθνικό Λαϊκό Μέτωπο) is an extreme right-wing party founded in 2008 that traditionally holds strong nationalistic positions, especially with regard to immigration issues. In the 2009 European Parliament election and in the 2011 national election it received 0.2 and 1.1 per cent of the votes respectively (Katsourides, 2013 and Ellinas, 2013).

The ratification process of EU treaties tracks political parties’ attitude towards the European project. All Greek Cypriot political parties represented in the Parliament, in government or in opposition, demonstrated pro-European positions and strategies and voted in favour of the Law ratifying the Accession Treaty on the 14 July 2003 (Law N35(III)/2003). This broad political consensus was not observed in the case of subsequent EU Treaties. AKEL rejected the ratification of both the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe in 2005 (Law 15(1)/2005 of 30.6.2005) and the Lisbon Treaty in 2008 (Law 17(III)/2008 of 3 July 2008). The House of Representatives ratified the Lisbon Treaty on 3 July 2008, with 31 votes in favour, 17 against and one abstention. DISY, DIKO, EDEK, and EVROKO voted in favour, while the ruling Communist party AKEL voted against and the Green Party abstained.

Empirical evidence suggests that in Cyprus the ‘permissive consensus’ was an operational concept until the mid-2000s. By voting against the ratification of the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe in 2005 and the Lisbon Treaty in 2008, AKEL marked the end of the ‘permissive consensus’. As far as the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG) is concerned, on the eve of important political events – the 2012 Cyprus EU Council presidency, the 2013 presidential election and the growing debt crisis – the ruling party AKEL avoided any parliamentary debate, leading to its depoliticization and the minimization of its scope and implications.
5.1.2 Turkish Cypriot political party attitude towards the EU

CTP (Republican Turkish Party – Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi) is a left-wing party with a clear pro-European stance.

UBP (National Unity Party – Ulusal Birlik Partisi) is a right-wing Conservative party that completely opposed Cyprus’ entry to the EU, particularly before Turkey’s accession.

DP (Democratic Party – Demokrat Parti) is a centre-right nationalist party with Eurosceptic positions. It also opposed EU membership and any involvement in the accession negotiations.

By contrast, BDH (Peace and Democracy Movement – Barış ve Demokrasi Hareketi), a coalition consisting of three parties, the Communal Liberation Party, the Cyprus Socialist Party, and the United Cyprus Party, is traditionally pro-European.

6 Public opinion and the European Union

Citizens’ attitudes towards European integration, European institutions and European policies have become increasingly important. The forceful entry of public opinion into theoretical debates about the European integration project was confirmed each and every time European
citizens were called upon to express their preferences. This illustrates a key and far-reaching development and highlights the incremental weakening of the implicit assumption of a ‘permissive consensus’ on behalf of citizens (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970). It is clear that public opinion trends and attitudes cannot continue to be considered unimportant or be neglected without serious repercussions for the future of the European integration process itself. Needless to say, the forceful entry of public opinion is not a bad thing in itself, but it does pose a problem for a project that has been elite-driven for decades.

In October 2004, 52 per cent of Cypriot people judged the EU to be a good thing. However, this percentage fluctuated wildly over the years and fell to 37 per cent in May 2011. Over the years, the percentage of those who have expressed a negative opinion on EU membership has risen from merely 15 per cent in 2004 to 25 per cent in 2011, reaching a peak in June 2010 with 29 per cent. Respectively, the percentage of those who believe that Cyprus membership is neither good nor bad has increased by 6 per cent between 2004 and 2011.

Cypriots are divided equally between those who see Cyprus’ of the EU membership as beneficial and those who reject that idea. Over the years, both the percentages fluctuated markedly, reaching approximately the same level in May 2011, 48 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.

In Cyprus, the absence of any organized opposition to the country’ accession to the European Union contributed to the consolidation of a broad domestic consensus amongst all political parties, which remained unchallenged until the first couple of accession years. This led to a
certain depoliticization of European issues, with some notable exceptions, as in the case of the Partnership for Peace programme.

The impact of the euro-zone crisis on Cyprus in the early 2010s seems to have laid the foundations for a turning point with regards to Cypriot public opinion dynamics towards European integration. Scholarly work tracing the patterns of Euroscepticism in Cyprus, mapping the extent and the causality of party and popular Euroscepticism in the country, has revealed a number of trends that the debt crisis has exacerbated: Cypriot Euroscepticism has undergone a shift from ideological to strategic in terms of motives and from nested to mainstream in terms of magnitude. The soft and nested opposition to European integration, initially confined to groups of citizens mainly on the left of the ideological spectrum for the Greek Cypriot community and on the right for the Turkish Cypriot community, acquired mainstream characteristics and can be identified across the political spectrum. Public opinion displays a decline in support and an increase in mistrust towards the EU (Agapiou-Josephides, 2011). The euro-zone crisis and the highly politicized public debates triggered by the, to this date, unprecedented combined bail-in/bail-out method applied only in the case of Cyprus, highlighted a number of issues and questions that have seriously affected public opinion.

7 National and EP electoral systems

The electoral system in the Republic of Cyprus is based on proportional representation, which favours a multiparty system. The electoral threshold is set at 1.8 per cent of valid votes cast. The country holds direct elections with open party-list proportional representation and a preferential system. Six political parties were represented in Parliament during the 2006–2011 and 2011–2016 terms.


When comparing the electoral systems for the national Parliament, Vouli ton Antiprosopon-Βουλή των Αντιπροσώπων, and for the European Parliament, it is possible to notice a number of similarities, but, also, and primarily, a number of meaningful and interesting differences. The key common feature is the electoral system, which is based on proportional representation. However, the interest of the comparison lies in the differences between the two sets of elections, namely the number of constituencies and the dynamics of the elections, the voter turnout and the funding of the electoral campaigns. Second-Order Election features are prominent in many respects.

For the purpose of EP elections, the whole territory of the Republic of Cyprus forms a single constituency, while it forms six for national elections. As a matter of fact, with a little bit more than half a million voters and a territory of 9,251 square kilometres, any other option can hardly be justified on objective grounds. It is worth highlighting the potential of EP elections for Cypriot citizens, as they represent the only opportunity for Greek and Turkish Cypriots to exercise their electoral rights together, even before reunification. Elected MEPs will then work together in their respective political groups in the EP on the basis of political, not national or ethnic grounds. This is indeed a new and promising political arena for the two communities.

Voting is compulsory, but without any penalties in case of abstention. This used to secure a high voter turnout. All citizens of the Republic, as well as all citizens of any EU Member State, residing in the island for a period of at least six months and aged at least 18 years, are entitled to vote in EP elections under the same conditions, but on separate electoral rolls, by virtue of a special application form. The Cypriot system does not offer alternative voting methods, such as electronic, postal, or proxy voting. Even though in 2009 the number of EU voters almost doubled following the previous
European Parliament elections in 2004, the number of those who registered to vote increased by only around 10 per cent. Cyprus was not an exception in this respect. Potential EU voters may witness best practices, such as receiving individual letters, but also face a number of obstacles in the exercise of their rights, namely concerning their registration on electoral rolls and party affiliation.

Candidates can be nominated by registered political parties, political party alliances, and constituency associations. The maximum number of candidates per political party or electoral alliance is six. Cypriot citizens and nationals of other EU Member States, who have not been deprived of their voting rights, have the right to vote from the age of 18 and to stand for election from the age of 25. Voters are entitled to choose between individual candidates from party lists presented in alphabetical order. Seat distribution is based on a combination of the Droop method and the highest remainder (Lehmann 2009, 50). Seats won by each political party or electoral alliance are allocated to the candidates that get the largest number of preferences.

As far as the funding of political campaigns is concerned, political parties receive an annual grant from the government, which is usually higher in election years. This was, though, not the case for the two sets of European Parliament elections in 2004 and 2009. Political parties received less money and, consequently, devoted less money to EP election campaigns in both the 2004 and 2009 EP elections. As a result, political campaigns received less money, less media attention, and, more importantly, less voter attention. This campaign deficit is somehow to some extent covered by the institutional campaign planned and implemented by the EP office in Cyprus.

EP elections offer a new arena and can make the benefits of reunification available immediately. Citizens’ rights are not suspended in the areas in which the government does not exercise effective control, as is the case for the acquis communautaire (Act of Accession, Protocol 10, Article 1, 2003) and thus, Turkish Cypriots can indeed vote. Cypriot citizens, Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike, who reside in these areas can, therefore, exercise their electoral rights. In 2004, heavy contextual factors shadowed the opportunity offered by the EP elections. In 2009, about 1,300 Turkish Cypriots seized this opportunity.

8 A glance at the EP and national elections

A comparative look at national and EP elections enables us to detect a number of meaningful insights pertaining to key issues, such as voter participation, party competition, and political campaign funding.

In Cyprus, the substantially lower voter turnout in the 2004 and 2009 EP elections of 72.5 and 59.4 per cent respectively, as compared to 91.8 and 89 per cent reached at the 2001 and 2006 national parliamentary elections, confirms the Second-Order Election theory. Indeed, compared to the preceding parliamentary elections, the difference in terms of voter turnout was 19.3 per cent in the case of 2004 and 29.6 per cent in the case of the 2009 EP election.

Abstention in EP elections seems to have become a mainstream phenomenon. It started with a percentage of 27.5 in 2004 and grew abruptly to 40.6 in 2009. This trend increased even more dramatically to 56.03 in 2014, mainly due to the impact of the economic and financial crisis. Despite the fact that voting is compulsory in Cyprus, so far, there has been a lax approach to enforcement. Abstention in the two sets of European elections was, in both cases, significantly higher than in the previous national elections. In brief, the case of Cyprus is similar to that of most other countries, though abstention was markedly much higher in comparison with other Member States where voting is compulsory.

In terms of party competition, the case of Cyprus presents common as well as idiosyncratic features. Scholarly research has identified two dimensions that structure party competition on European integration issues: the left/right and the green/alternative/libertarian (Gal) and traditionalism/authority/nationalism (Tan) (Gal/Tan dimension) (Marks and Hooghe, 2006,
Both dimensions can be identified in the case of Cyprus, though in an uneven way, with the first one overshadowing the second one. This can be explained by the fact the left/right dimension better serves the political agenda of the two big parties at the two poles of the political spectrum, whereas, the Gal/Tan dimension serves smaller parties’ political agenda.

Idiosyncratic features pertain to the country’s political question. They appeared prominently among the various dimensions that structured party competition at European Parliament Election in 2004 and to a lesser extent in 2009. In the first case, they attracted almost exclusive media and citizen attention. They were by far the most prominent and discussed issues overshadowing all other ‘European’ subjects of the campaign, the European dimension and the real challenges and meaning of EP elections. National issues featured somehow less prominently and questions pertaining to the European political agenda started appearing timidly.

The first European Parliament elections in Cyprus were held only six weeks after its accession on 1 May 2004, and seven weeks after the crucial referendum on the Annan Plan for a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem held on 24 April 2004. The Annan Plan deeply divided Cypriot society, both along ethnic and political lines. It led to major divisions among political parties, both at the elite and popular level. AKEL was initially in favour and then contested it. As for DISY, whilst its leadership was quite keen on the project, not all of its members supported it. Consequently, some of them left and created a new party: For Europe, which, as a new political force, benefitted from the conducive environment favouring new parties, as well as contextual factors, and elected one MEP. The outcome of the elections revealed a decline in the voting share of both major parties in comparison to the 2001 general election, albeit less dramatically than expected. DISY won the elections, with 28.2 per cent and therefore obtained two seats in the EP, and AKEL followed closely with almost 27.9 per cent, which also secured two seats. DIKO improved its performance in relation to general elections, by rising from 14.8 per cent to almost 17.1 per cent and gained one seat. As for the Social Democrats EDEK, with a score of 10.7 per cent, they failed to secure a seat in the EP, by only 37 votes (Ker-Lindsay and Webb, 2005) to the benefit of the newcomer For Europe, the splinter party of DISY.
Table 20.4 National election results in Cyprus: 2001, 2006 and 2011

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<th>Political party</th>
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<td>Vote %</td>
<td>Number of MPs</td>
<td>Number of votes</td>
<td>Vote %</td>
</tr>
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<td>AKEL</td>
<td>142,647</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>131,066</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>132,171</td>
<td>32.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISY</td>
<td>139,732</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>127,776</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>138,682</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIKO</td>
<td>60,977</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75,458</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63,763</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDEK/KISOS</td>
<td>26,770</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37,533</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36,113</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVROKO</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>24,196</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15,711</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDI United Democrats</td>
<td>10,640</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6,567</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Horizons</td>
<td>12,334</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentalists</td>
<td>8,128</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8,193</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8,960</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAM</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,354</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9,768</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10,310</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,823</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turnout</strong></td>
<td><strong>428,990</strong></td>
<td><strong>91.8</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td><strong>445,915</strong></td>
<td><strong>89.0</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td><strong>418,247</strong></td>
<td><strong>78.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the parliamentary election of 2006, the two biggest political parties lost in comparison to the 2001 general election, but improved slightly in relation to the 2004 EP election. AKEL received 31.1 per cent of the votes, 3.6 less than in 2001, securing 18 seats, two less compared to the previous elections. DISY obtained 30.3 per cent and 18 seats, thus 3.7 less than in 2001 and one seat less than previously. By contrast, DIKO received 17.9, thus, 3.01 more than in 2001 and gained a total of 11 seats, two more than in the previous elections. EDEK reached 8.9 per cent, increasing its voting share by 2.4 per cent compared to 2001, with five seats, one more than previously. The new political party EVROKO was also able to achieve representation by getting 5.8 per cent of the votes and three seats. The Ecologists received 1.9 per cent and one seat.

In both sets of EP elections, the voter turnout was significantly lower than in the preceding national elections. The two biggest political parties suffered losses, while smaller parties struggled to get representation, particularly in the EP, due to the low number of seats available and the high number of votes they needed to get. In terms of the government/opposition dimension, the Cypriot case offers rather mixed evidence. More empirical evidence from future sets of EP elections is needed for safe conclusions with regard to key theoretical concerns.

9 The 2009 European election

The history of the EP elections in Cyprus is definitely interwoven with the country’s political destiny (Melakopides, 2005; Agapiou-Josephides, 2005). As a divided polity in a united Europe, the country presents both common and idiosyncratic features in terms of European Parliament elections. On the idiosyncratic side, one needs to bear in mind the suspension of the *acquis communautaire*, under Article 1 of Protocol 10: ‘The application of the acquis shall be suspended in those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control.’ This is indeed a *sui generis* situation and can provide some explanation of why EP elections have never been held in these areas and why only a small number of Turkish Cypriot citizens are registered on the electoral rolls for the EP elections, despite the efforts deployed by the EP Office in Cyprus and the government of the Republic.

Although the 2009 EP election took place in a substantially different context compared to the one five years earlier, contextual factors, though not so dramatic, did play an important role once again. The timing of the contest was, indeed, not particularly helpful. But, timing on its own cannot explain the abstention rate of 40.6 per cent, the biggest ever in the country’s electoral history. It was also an expression of a growing dissatisfaction with party politics and government performance.

9.1 Party lists and manifestos

Eight political formations presented 47 candidates selected amongst members of the House of Representatives, incumbent MEPs, and party officials to run for the 2009 EP election. The number of female candidates was only ten, equivalent to 21 per cent and slightly lower than the 22 per cent in 2004. The only list with more female than male candidates, four out of six, was the Ecologist-Environmentalist party that had virtually no chances of winning a single seat; AKEL and DISY nominated only one woman respectively; DIKO nominated two; and the Socialist Party and the Movement for the Reunification of Cyprus nominated one respectively.

AKEL, affiliated with the European/United Left/Nordic Green Left (EUL/NGL), as the only political party that held a Eurosceptic/Eurocritical position had major difficulties in reconciling its Eurosceptic rhetoric with its usual tactics for party mobilization in view of the 2009 EP election. The difference in the language used in the party’s programme and during the actual campaign reveals this malaise. It also highlights the party’s strategy to provide ordinary party
members with good reasons for the need to cast their vote. Issues related to workers’ rights and a differentiation between small and middle-sized enterprises dominated its agenda (Charalambous, 2009; Christophorou, 2010).

In line with the European People’s Party’s position, DISY was very keen to highlight the positive effects of EU membership and presented itself as the leading pro-European party, particularly against its main contender, AKEL.

DIKO also emphasized its European credentials by giving full endorsement to the economic aspects of the European integration process. The Social Democrats EDEK, who worked closely with the European Socialist Party, clearly declared their ambition to secure a seat in the EP. The right-wing European party (EVROKO), gathering former members of DISY, who did not support the Annan Plan, clearly highlighted the Cyprus question (Christophorou, 2009, 60).

Finally, the Ecologists presented a programme focussed on environmental issues.

The Cyprus question was raised once again by highlighting divisions amongst political parties: AKEL and DISY were supportive of the Annan Plan, while EVROKO and DIKO opposed it. Another highly political issue that dominated the campaign was the potential membership of Cyprus to the NATO-sponsored programme Partnership for Peace. Whereas AKEL and the Ecologists rejected the text of a resolution that was debated in Parliament, DISY, EDEK, and DIKO defended it.

Concerns regarding the financial crisis emerged during the campaign and were especially highlighted by AKEL. Divisions about the merits of the liberal market economy also became associated with the ‘clash of capitalisms’ model in the EU. In summary, domestic as well as European issues, though seen through domestic lenses, dominated the campaign. In brief, political parties failed to attract people’s interest and to mobilize citizens and party members. The ‘low cost’ campaign could not explain citizens’ low interest, as the phenomenon was far more complex. While lip service was paid to European issues, national issues prevailed in the campaign, though in a milder way than in 2004.

9.2 Electoral campaign

Scholarly work through cross-national and longitudinal studies, as well as national case studies on political communication in EP elections consistently, suggests the ‘hybrid character of these elections as both national and European’ (Maier et al., 2011, 13). Empirical evidence suggests that this not only affects political parties, candidates and voters, but shapes the behaviour of all three sets of actors and their interdependent relationships.

Due to the complex matrix of political communication pertaining to EP elections, it is not possible to blame the one or the other actor without taking into account the behaviour of the other actors. The manifold deficit in political communication is nevertheless there and needs to be addressed. The EP institutional pan-European information campaign was launched during a press conference at the EU House in Nicosia on 17 March 2009, and was aimed at addressing the political communication gap by informing Cypriot citizens about EP elections. The campaign included various actions, such as talks, presentations and debates organized on different occasions. Special 3D installations were prepared and placed in Nicosia and Limassol, while the EE 2009 logo and banners were placed on the façade of the EU House, in busy locations throughout Cyprus, at trade unions’ headquarters, and also on big screens at events attracting large audiences, such as football matches.

The Ministry of Interior, NGOs, mainstream media, and universities were persuaded to use the logo of the 2009 Euro-elections on their websites. Moreover, the Head and Press Attaché of the EP office visited TV and radio stations in order to persuade them to broadcast free advertising spots,
to present EP websites, and to disseminate information material. In addition, a seminar was run in Brussels for the editors-in-chief of all of the major Cypriot media. In order to promote Euro-elections, interviews, statements, and articles appeared in newspapers, whilst leaflets, posters, and stickers were produced, some of which were distributed as inserts in the Sunday editions of two national newspapers. Finally, a big official reception was organized on Europe Day, also featuring the 2009 Euro-elections, which took place in Nicosia on 9 May 2009 and the beach party on EP Elections, which was held in Limassol on 31 May 2009. One of the most successful and popular initiatives was the placing of a ‘choice box’ in Nicosia, where citizens could address their messages to Europe.

9.3 Electoral results

In the 2009 EP election, the turnout declined to 59.4 per cent, getting closer to the EU average and equivalent to one-third less than in the 2006 national electoral contest. The big winners were actually the two main parties, which achieved a higher share of the vote than in the previous parliamentary election.

Although the opposition party DISY was the winner with 35.6 per cent of the vote and two seats, the governing AKEL was not far behind with 34.9 per cent of the share of the vote and two seats, too. AKEL even improved its performance in comparison to the 2006 elections. The other major winner was the Social Democrats (EDEK), which achieved its stated goal to get one MEP elected; EDEK received 9.8 per cent and one seat. The centrist DIKO’s share declined in comparison to both the EP elections of 2004 and the general elections of 2006. It got 12.2 per cent, therefore managing to keep its only seat.

Out of the six MEPs who were elected to the EP in 2009, there were two women: Eleni Theoharous from DISY, who belongs to the EPP and Antigoni Papadopoulou from DIKO, who belongs to the S&D. This was a major breakthrough as no women MEPs were elected in 2004. Cypriot women are better represented in the European Parliament than at the national and local level. Finally, it is worth noting that four out of the six MEPs, two-thirds, were newcomers, whilst the remaining two were incumbents, notably Ioannis Kasoulides (DISY) and Kyriakos Triantaphillides (AKEL).

9.4 Campaign finance

Political parties invested limited effort and funds in a relatively short campaign in terms of intensity, scale, and resources, thus confirming the general trend at EU level, where the funds devoted to EP campaigns usually varied by 10 to 30 per cent of those spent by political parties on national elections (Gagatek, 2010, 15). The interesting revelation of the Cypriot case is not that political parties spent much less on EP elections, but rather the fact that the government itself budgeted political party grants in the relevant election years, 2004 and 2009, as if no competitions were planned.

The law sets an upper limit concerning the budget each candidate can spend on her/his campaign. A detailed report of expenses is to be submitted three weeks after the publication of the election results in the Official Journal. The candidates are largely responsible for funding their own campaign, except in the case of AKEL. Each party decides the budget it wishes to spend, which may vary from less than 100 to several thousands of euros.

10 Theoretical interpretation of Euro-elections

10.1 Second-Order Election theory

As a matter of fact, the two sets of EP elections in Cyprus have failed to establish what Simon Hix and Michael Marsh (2007) call ‘electoral connection’ between citizens and politics in the
Table 20.5 EP election results in Cyprus: 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National party</th>
<th>Number of votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Number of MEPs</th>
<th>Party family</th>
<th>Political group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISY</td>
<td>109,209</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Centre-right</td>
<td>EPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKEL</td>
<td>106,922</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>European Left</td>
<td>EUL/NGL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIKO</td>
<td>37,625</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>European Socialists</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDEK</td>
<td>30,169</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>European Socialists</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVROKO</td>
<td>12,630</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>European Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentalists</td>
<td>4,602</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>European Green Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAM</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5,168</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout</td>
<td>312,479</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20.6 List of Cypriot MEPs: seventh legislature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>National party</th>
<th>Political group</th>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Professional background</th>
<th>Year of birth</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takis Hadjigeorgiou</td>
<td>AKEL</td>
<td>EUL/NGL</td>
<td>Committee on Foreign Affairs (Member)</td>
<td>BA in Law</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ioannis Kasoulides*</td>
<td>DISY</td>
<td>EPP</td>
<td>Committee on Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>MD in Medicine</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Committee on Foreign Affairs (Vice-Chair)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyriakos Mavronikolas**</td>
<td>EDEK</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
<td>Subcommittee on Security and Defence (Vice-Chair)</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Committee on Foreign Affairs (Member)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigoni Papadopoulou</td>
<td>DIKO</td>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
<td>Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (Member)</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleni Theocharous</td>
<td>DISY</td>
<td>EPP</td>
<td>Committee on Foreign Affairs (Member)</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Member of the Bureau</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyriacos Triantafyllides</td>
<td>AKEL</td>
<td>EUL/NGL</td>
<td>Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (Member)</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes:
* After the nomination of Ioannis Kasoulides as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2013, Andreas Pitsillides became an MEP.
** Following the resignation of Kyriakos Mavronikolas in 2012, Sophocles Sophocleous became an MEP.
European Parliament. Cypriot voters seemed to follow the mainstream trend (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Lodge, 2005; 2010). Briefly, they expressed national choices rather than preferences over EU-level political alternatives and voter turnout was much lower than in the previous national parliamentary elections.

After only two EP electoral contests in 2004 and 2009, it is premature to conclude safely on the robustness of the Second-Order Election (SOE) model. Having said that, we can observe that, to date, there is strong evidence on some key issues and rather mixed evidence on some others. Some of the model’s key elements, such as lower voter turnout, as compared to the previous national elections, were confirmed in all sets of EP elections. However, some other elements observed in 2004, such as the big parties’ performance, were not confirmed in 2009. Big parties lost votes in the 2004 EP election as compared to the 2001 parliamentary election, but they won votes in the 2009 EP election compared to the 2006 parliamentary election.

Turnout at the EP election in 2004 and especially in 2009 was lower than at national parliamentary elections. The figure recorded in 2009 was the lowest ever in the electoral history of the country and thus consistent with the SOE model. In terms of the financing of the electoral campaign, both in 2004 and 2009, it was confirmed that political parties did not invest great resources, in line with the SOE logic. The interesting revelation, in this respect, is that the government itself proceeded in a way that reflects this reality, by not granting political parties a budget for a non-electoral year.

As for the emergence of new parties, Cyprus does not provide useful evidence, bar the political party For Europe (Για την Ευρώπη) in 2004. The hypothesis regarding the punishment of governing parties by voters is validated only to some extent. Last but not least, with regard to the focus of the elections on national issues, Cyprus provides full evidence in 2004 and, to a lesser extent, in 2009.

In accordance with the SOE model, both major parties lost, whilst smaller ones did better. Nevertheless, the difference between parliamentary and European elections is negligible. The pro-European DISY did better than the Eurosceptic/Eurocritical AKEL, even though the differences between the two main parties were minimal. Indeed, to date, DISY has always been able to win and perform better than AKEL at the Euro-elections, even though only slightly.

The low number of MEPs creates problems for smaller parties, which in fact compete for two seats out of six. The emergence of the party For Europe, a splinter party of DISY over the UN Plan, in the 2004 EP election, reduced the chances for the Social Democrats, which did not gain representation by a whisker. Compared to national elections, smaller parties do better, but often not enough to achieve representation. Party size matters, as the larger political formations have more chances of gaining seats.

Timing still does not seem to be a major issue for a change of fortunes, maybe due to the fact that the presidential system in Cyprus produces a different dynamic than in the parliamentary democracies that exist in the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, they do serve as a test case for future national elections.

10.2 Europe Salience theory

In line with Europe Salience theory, political parties compete via selective issues they ‘own’ (Dolezal et al., 2013). However, further research is required to identify the specific conditions under which parties are more likely to adopt a strategy based on selective emphasis rather than direct confrontation. Empirical evidence from the EP elections in Cyprus suggests that political parties, by using both strategies, opted for a dual-track approach. Furthermore, the Cypriot case study highlights the interesting rationale behind the strategy choice. Direct confrontation seems to be clearly preferred for, nay reserved to, highly political issues that could be ideologically identified with the party and, thus, issues that could mobilize the electorate. The case of the Partnership for Peace is a prime example of confrontational approach. For other issues that do not appear so prominently on the
political agenda and that are not so strong from an ideological point of view, political parties opted for the selective emphasis approach.

European issues have not dominated the campaigns and debates in the two sets of EP elections held so far in the Republic of Cyprus. Whereas they were definitely not salient in the 2004 EP elections, they started making their way in 2009.

In 2004, European issues were hardly observable on two main grounds pertaining to contextual and new arena factors. The United Nations Referendum on the country’s reunification, held a couple of weeks before the first EP election held in 2004, overshadowed all political processes affecting each and every single item of the political agenda. It deeply divided Cypriot society across the political spectrum, as well as the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Beyond this country-specific contextual reason, the new arena dimension played its own role in keeping European issues off the top of the political agenda. Indeed, all key stakeholders, candidates/politicians, media, and citizens alike, tended to avoid European questions, as they were less comfortable with these than with national ones. Citizens, on their behalf, were not familiar with EU institutions, and thus could not really be interested in almost unknown institutions of a complex and atypical political system beyond the nation-state. The media took it easy and played the game as set by the key stakeholders, who are, at the same time, their recipients.

In 2009, contextual factors became less important and European issues started finding their place on the political agenda, making a shy appeal in EP election public discourse, but only through national lenses again.

Up to the 2009 election, there were no outright small Eurosceptic parties campaigning on anti-European issues. AKEL has moderated its leftist Euroscepticism towards Eurocriticism in an effort to combine both strategic and ideological considerations. Indeed, the visibility offered by EU membership to the governing party and the need to keep a high electoral score at the EP elections, especially in view of the next national elections, were better served by this newly devised smart shift. The party’s announced contribution to the shaping of the European integration process towards a more social Europe as an overarching aim, illustrates the new dynamics. The European Party, EVROKO, a spin-off of DISY, has no major ideological differences with DISY, except for EVROKO’s firm opposition to the 2004 UN plan.

As to the issues and topics raised in campaigns, one can identify a major gap between left and right parties. AKEL and EDEK emphasize social issues and workers’ rights, while DISY, DIKO, and EVROKO focus more on economic issues. There is also a Green party, the KOP, which highlights environmental issues.

Two sets of elections can, by no means, provide sufficient evidence for cross-time analysis. More time is required and additional research is necessary in order to assess whether, in the long run, the dynamics of EP contests in Cyprus fits into main EP election theories: Second-Order Election and Europe Salience. Trends have nevertheless emerged and they seem to reveal fairly strong evidence for some key aspects of the SOE model and not for others, and rather weak evidence for the Europe Salience theory.

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