



Cyprus: Elections and the rule of law

The elections at a glance

When? 30 May 2021

Who is being elected? All 56 members of the House of Representatives.

Who is leading the polls? (*Politico/Kalman*)

- Democratic Rally (EPP) **26%**
- Progressive Party of Working People (GUE/NGL) **24%**
- Democratic Party (S&D) **13%**
- National Popular Front (-) **7%**
- Movement of Ecologists - Citizens' Cooperation (-) **7%**
- Movement for Social Democracy (S&D) **6%**

System of government: EU's only full presidential system

Electoral system: proportional representation within six multi-member electoral districts; 3.6% electoral threshold

Election rules & covid-19:

- Only in-person voting of registered voters at polling stations is permitted. Registration closed on 2 April. Mobile polling stations will allow those infected with covid-19 to vote from home.
- Postal voting is not possible. No exceptions have been made this year.
- Voting at polling stations abroad is possible, although only in **three cities**: Athens, London and Thessaloniki.
- No effective communication about health safety regulations for Election Day.

Key numbers & facts

- [Freedom House Freedom in the World 2021](#): **Score 94/100, free** (10/27 in the EU)
- [RSF World Press Freedom Index 2021](#): **Rank 26/180** (13/27 in the EU)
- [TI Corruption Perception Index 2020](#): **Rank 42/180** (16/27 in the EU)
- [Eurobarometer on Rule of Law 2019](#): **87% of Cypriots** see a strong need for improvement of effective justice delivery by independent courts (50% EU average)
- [Implementation of leading ECHR cases](#): **58% pending from the last 10 years** (45% average)
- In October 2020, the European Commission introduced an [infringement procedure](#) against Cyprus, arguing its golden passports scheme violates EU law.

Experts consulted

- Prof. Stéphanie Lauthé Shaelou, University of Central Lancashire – Cyprus
- Dr. Mikaela Yiatrou, European University Institute

Further reading

- [OSCE ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report February 2021](#)
- [EU Commission 2020 Rule of Law Report Cyprus](#)
- [Eurobarometer on Corruption 2020](#)

Top rule of law issues in Cyprus



Corruption: The [number one](#) issue in this election. Last year's [revelation](#) that high-level politicians were involved in the now abolished [golden passports scheme](#) sparked outrage across the country. Cyprus witnessed its largest [protests](#) in years, despite a blanket ban on demonstrations due to covid-19. All parties are running on an anti-corruption platform, irrespective of party members' past behaviour.



Covid-19 restrictions: The measures have been very restrictive in Cyprus, including a complete ban on public protests and strong limitations of the freedom of movement, at times making leaving one's home conditional on receiving text message permissions by the government. With rule by decree and the [courts having refused to review the measures](#), the pandemic has also [further increased government power](#) in a country where the executive is already the dominant branch of government.



Slow pace of justice: Cyprus has one of the [slowest justice systems](#) in the EU, with cases taking years to be resolved. Judicial reform is on the political agenda; however, the latest bill [failed to pass](#) in parliament and was not targeted at the clogged-up lower level courts.