

Cyprus

1. Flag

- Created and adopted in 1960

The Cypriot flag stands out as being the only one in the whole world, along with that of Kosovo, that represents the country's outline. This appears in a golden colour, symbolising the wealth of the island's subsoil, where copper has been extracted since the 3000 B.C. In Latin, the word *cyprium* can be translated by "metal of Cyprus" or "bronze of Cyprus", another name for copper, which is the origin of the name of the island in English.



When the Cypriots put an end to British presence on the island, at the time of the declaration of independence of the entire island in 1960, the flag was created and adopted after long negotiations between the British, Turks, Greeks and Monseigneur Makarios, Orthodox Archbishop of Nicosia, who had become the president of the new Republic. The white background and the olive branch under the map of Cyprus bear witness to the search for peace and serenity that prevailed at the time.

The flag is the result of a competition launched in 1960. The specifications provided for the avoidance both the colours blue or red, and the symbols of the cross or crescent that would excessively mark one or other of the communities. A neutral stance would lead to the choice of a consensual emblem expressing peace.

Reality would however quickly tarnish all hopes. Independence was just a temporary compromise between the communities. Tensions rose with the Greek Regime of the Colonels, who brought Makarios down in 1974. Troops from Ankara invaded Northern Cyprus and the Turkish islanders proclaimed an Autonomous Republic there. The island was divided in two. Despite UN and EU attempts, the status quo remains. The accession of Cyprus to the EU, which began in 1990, was meant to concern the entire island. Since 2004, only the southern part is concerned by this accession, the northern part depending on resolution of the crisis between Cyprus and Turkey. One week before entry into the EU on 1 May 2004, the Greek Cypriots had rejected the UN unification plan proposed by Kofi Annan (Annan Plan). During discussions of this plan, a proposed flag had been mentioned for a future unified island. It had the blue and red colours, associated with a band of copper-coloured yellow, contrary to the choice made in 1960.

2. Anthem

- *Ύμνος εις την Ελευθερίαν*
(Hymn to Liberty)
- Written by Dionysios Solomos
- Composed by Nikolaos Mantzaros
- Created in 1823 - Adopted in 1966

By virtue of its insular and strategic position in the Mediterranean maritime area, the island of Cyprus has been highly coveted and has thus been under the influence and domination of various powers throughout its history. After a brilliant civilisation founded in 2500 B.C., then the cities founded by the Greeks, followed the Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, before the era of Christian crusades brought Richard the Lionheart there in the late 12th century. The latter left the territory to Guy de Lusignan, a Frenchman originally from the Poitou region, whose family would govern the island for three centuries. When this dynasty died out, the island went to the Venetians before the Turks affirmed their supremacy there between the 14th to the 19th centuries.

The Ottomans entrusted its administration to the British, who only took full and entire possession of the island after World War I.

It was during the Ottoman period that Dionysios Solomos wrote a poem in verse in 1823, translated into French with the title of *Dithyrambe sur la Liberté* (dithyramb to freedom). It was progressively set to music by his friend Nikolaos Mantzaros, and the version presented publicly in 1844 corresponded to the current one.

After independence of the entire island in 1960, debate on the choice of national symbols floundered and it was only in November 1966 that the Greek Cypriot community unilaterally decided the the Greek anthem *Ύμνος εις την Ελευθερίαν* would become that of the island. After division between the communities in 1974, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognised by Ankara alone, chose the Turkish anthem *İstiklâl Marşı* as national anthem.

Among other elements, the UN proposal known as the Annan Plan proposed a common anthem in 2004, but this entire plan was rejected by referendum.

Ύμνος εις την Ελευθερίαν

Σὲ γνωρίζω ἀπὸ τὴν κόπι
Τοῦ σπαθιοῦ τὴν τρομερή,
Σὲ γνωρίζω ἀπὸ τὴν ὄφι,
Ποῦ μὲ βία μετράει τὴν γῆ.
Ἀπ' τὰ κόκκαλα βγαλμένη
Τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὰ ιερά,
Καὶ σὰν πρῶτα ἀνδρειωμένη,
Χαῖρε, ὦ χαῖρε, Ἐλευθεριά! (× 3)

Hymn to Liberty

I shall always recognise you
By the dreadful sword you hold
as the Earth with searching vision
You survey with spirit bold.
From the Greeks of old whose dying
Brought to life and spirit free,
Now with ancient valour rising,
Let us hail you, oh Liberty! (× 3)

