Cyprus

The small yet dynamic Mediterranean island of Cyprus, famous for the warmth and hospitality of its people, continues to be an attractive location to live, work and invest. The island's sophisticated and sun kissed lifestyle coupled with its exceptional business infrastructure has proven a winning combination.

Located in the Eastern Mediterranean at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Cyprus' strategic position has played a key role in shaping its history and in developing the island into a centre for trade and international business. Despite being a country of only 865,900 people, the Republic of Cyprus has steadily built itself into a thriving business centre and has much to offer in these terms. The EU-compliant domicile has a well-educated workforce, a low-cost business environment with a wealth of support services, a sophisticated ICT infrastructure and an investor-friendly tax regime – backed up by an extensive network of **double taxation agreements** with around 60 countries. Not only is Cyprus a developed business centre, but also one of Europe's favourite holiday destinations, offering a perfect balance between business and pleasure.

Education

Cyprus has a highly developed system of primary and secondary education offering both public and private education. The high quality of instruction can be attributed in part to the fact that nearly 7% of the GDP is spent on education which makes Cyprus one of the top three spenders of education in the EU along with Denmark and Sweden. State schools are generally seen as equivalent in quality of education to private-sector institutions. However, the value of a state high-school diploma is limited by the fact that the grades obtained account for only around 25% of the final grade for each topic, with the remaining 75% assigned by the teacher during the semester, in a minimally transparent way. Cypriot universities (like universities in Greece) ignore high school grades almost entirely for admissions purposes. While a high-school diploma is mandatory for university attendance, admissions are decided almost exclusively on the basis of scores at centrally administered university entrance examinations that all university candidates are required to take.

The majority of Cypriots receive their higher education at Greek, British, Turkish, other European and North American universities. It is noteworthy that Cyprus currently has the highest percentage

of citizens of working age who have higher-level education in the EU at 30% which is ahead of Finland's 29.5%. In addition, 47% of its population aged 25–34 have tertiary education, which is the highest in the EU. The body of Cypriot students is highly mobile, with 78.7% studying in a university outside Cyprus.

People & Culture

Cyprus is well known for its hospitality, a fact reflected in the Greek word, 'xenos', used for both stranger and guest. Life is meant to be enjoyed in Cyprus, which is renowned for its excellent quality of life with an emphasis on working to live, rather than living to work. Café culture predominates, with both business and social meetings taking place over a leisurely frappe (iced coffee) in the numerous cafes in every town and city. As with most Mediterranean cultures, food plays a vital role and the famous Cyprus meze – a large selection of small, delectable dishes – is best enjoyed 'siga siga' (slowly slowly) al fresco, surrounded by.

Foreign Direct Investment

Cyprus' favourable and EU-approved **tax regime**, its flat rate of 12.5% corporate tax, pro-business government and highly skilled workforce, have long attracted **foreign investment** into the country. Most capital, predominantly coming from Greece, Russia, the US and UK, has been invested in the real estate, banking and wholesale trade sectors, but the economic crisis has opened new opportunities. With large scale developments, major infrastructure projects in the pipeline, new privatization plans, and with a restructured banking sector, many international investors are recognizing interesting opportunities on the island.