

Corinne Deloy

ANALYSIS

Outgoing head of State Nicos Anastasiades is the grand favourite in the Cypriot presidential election

On 28th January next 550, 593 Cypriots are being called to ballot to appoint their president of the Republic. If one of the five candidates running wins more than 50% of the vote he will win the election directly; if this is not the case a second round will be organised on 4th February.

12 517 people are registered on the Cypriot electoral rolls abroad where in all 38 voting stations will be opened, including 15 in Greece and 10 in the UK. According to the most recent polls by CMRC, outgoing head of State Nicos Anastasiades (Democratic Assembly DISY) is due to win the first round of the election with 29.1% of the vote. Nicolas Papadopoulos (Democratic Party, DIKO) is due to win 21.1% and Stavros Malas (Progressive Workers' Party AKEL), 18.79%. The latter are therefore fighting for 2nd place, which is synonymous to qualification for the 2nd round of the election. The two other candidates are due to win under 5% of the vote each.

The Cypriot Constitution dates back to 1960, but has not been applied since the inter-community conflict of 1963. According to this text the presidential office is reserved to a Cypriot, the Vice-President goes to a Turk (the post is presently vacant). The president of the Republic is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year mandate. Head of the executive, the latter appoints the ministers of the government that he leads.

30% of the government's seats and of the Vouli antiprosopon (House of Representatives, the only house of parliament), 24 out of 80, are reserved for the Cypriot Turkish community and remain vacant.

THE CANDIDATES FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

5 people are officially running:

- Nicos Anastasiades (Democratic Assembly DISY), outgoing head of State;
- Nicolas Papadopoulos (Democratic Party, DIKO), son of Tassos Papadopoulos former head of State (2003-2008) is running as an independent, but apart from DIKO he is supported by the Solidarity Movement (KA), founded and led by Eleni Theocharous; the Ecologist Movement-Citizen Cooperation (KOSP) led by George Perdakis and the Movement for Social Democracy (EDEK) led by Marinos Sizopoulos;

- Stavros Malas (Progressive Workers' Party, AKEL), former Healthcare Minister (2011-2013), is standing as an independent. He was the unfortunate candidate in the previous presidential election on 17th and 24th February 2013 (he won 45.52% of the vote in the 2nd round);
- Giorgos Lillikas (Citizens' Alliance), former Foreign Affairs Minister (2006-2007);
- Christos Christou, leader of the far-right party People's National Front (ELAM).

THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

Outgoing President of the Republic Nicos Anastasiades, announced that he would be running for re-election on 14th October,

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indicating that he wanted to finish the work he had started in his first term in office. He is standing as the man who saved the Cypriot economy and the banking system from crashing and as the guarantor of Cyprus's economic stability.

He maintained, during the vote on the 2018 budget that the government would reward the Cypriot population for the sacrifices it had made. He hopes to revive employment and to bring the unemployment level below the 10% mark, which would be a first in Cyprus since 2011. "It does not matter what divides us now, in 2023, the person who succeeds me, if the Cypriots renew my mandate, will lead a free modern State that is perfectly compatible with the population's expectations," declared Nicos Anastasiades.

Nicolas Papadopoulos has chosen to focus on the middle classes. He has promised to review the austerity measures that were introduced during the crisis, notably those affecting social aid, such as the student, maternity, family and housing allowance. He also hopes to reform the retirement system and to double the amount received in the case of small pensions. Finally, he wants to create a capital fund to give back to those whose savings were seized in part in 2013.

Stavros Malas is defending the traditional positions of the Progressive Workers' Party regarding the economy, a position that is difficult to hold since the party lost the electorate's trust in terms of its management of the economic crisis between 2008 and 2013. We should remember that in April 2013 Cyprus faced a serious financial crisis, and had to call for international aid. The Troika (IMF, EU and the ECB) accepted to grant the island a total of 10 billion € on reserve that the government introduce several reforms (cuts in civil servants' pay, increase in taxes, including VAT, an increase in social charges etc.). Nicosia recovered growth again in 2015 (1.4%) after three years of recession, and the island officially left the rescue programme on 31st March 2016.

The candidates in the presidential election on 28th January and 4th February next will be taking part in a TV debate on 22nd January that will be broadcast on the CyBC and by the channels ANT1, Sigma, TVONE

and Alpha. The first part of the debate will focus on the issue of the island's division and the second on domestic affairs.

AN ISLAND DIVIDED FOR NEARLY 44 YEARS

Many Cypriots have never seen their island united. Since July 1974 it has been split by a green line that is monitored by the UN's Blue Berets. The latter has been present on Cyprus since 1963, the year of the first clashes between the Greeks and Turks, comprising the two communities which live on Cyprus.

On 15th July 1974, the National Garde, inspired by the military junta in office in Greece since 1967 overthrew Cypriot president, Archbishop Makarios III and replaced him with Nikos Sampson. On 20th July, Turkish troops landed in Kyrenia (north) to protect the Turkish minority living there. With the help of the Greek army Nikos Sampson's government managed to contain them (a delimitation which became the green line) before collapsing four days later. Turkey refused however to leave the part of the island that it now occupied, including after the fall of Nikos Sampson. On 30th July 1974, Turkey, Greece and the UK established a security zone guarded by the UN's Blue Berets and acknowledged the existence of two autonomous administrations. On 13th February 1975 the Turkish leader proclaimed an autonomous, secular and federated State of which he was elected president in 1976. In January 1977 Rauf Denktash and Makarios III agreed on the principle of a federal, dual community State, but the death of the latter on 3rd August 1977 brought negotiations to an end. The Turkish Republic of Northern Turkey proclaimed its independence in 1983. Turkey is the only State to acknowledge it at international level. To date, 35 000 Turkish soldiers have always been stationed on the northern part of the island.

The Republic of Cyprus has around 1.7 million inhabitants one third of whom are refugees (160 000 Cypriots fled their homes when the Turks invaded); 314 000 people live in the northern part of the island. On 11th November 2002 the UN proposed a third peace and reunification plan (after those of 1986 and 1992). The Annan Plan (named after the UN Secretary General

at the time) suggested the creation of a United Republic of Cyprus in the shape of a confederation comprising two largely autonomous States (one, Greek in the South and the other Turkish, in the north) based on the model of the Helvetic Confederation. This plan was put to referendum including all of the island's inhabitants on 24th April 2004. The Cypriots rejected it by 75.83%, whilst 64.90% of those living in the northern part of the island accepted it. 89.18% of the electorate voted in Cyprus and 87% in the northern party.

Whilst they were stepped up in 2016, negotiations over the island's reunification between the Republic of Cyprus and the northern part of the island led by President Mustafa Akinci have been at a standstill since July 6th last, since both sides failed to agree on the status of the Turkish forces on the island and because Ankara refused to give up its right to intervention.

Nicos Anastasiades stands as the man who can bring the country's division to an end. The outgoing President has said that he is prepared to take up negotiations again according to the parameters set by the UN Secretary General, so as to protect what has already been achieved so far. "Not finding a solution is in neither in the Greek Cypriots' interest nor in that of the Turkish Cypriots, nor in that of Turkey. I would like to believe that Turkey will understand the benefits of a solution," declared Nicos Anastasiades adding, "Another historic opportunity will arise if I am re-elected."

Differences over the question of the island's reunification between the three main candidates in the presidential election (Nicos Anastasiades, Stavros Malas and Nicolas Papadopoulos) are minimal even though the latter supports a harder line and accuses the outgoing president of the Republic of having made too many concessions during negotiations.

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REMINDER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS ON 17TH AND 24TH FEBRUARY 2013 IN CYPRUS.

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Turnout: 83.14% (1st round) and 81.58% (2nd round)

Candidates	No of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	No of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes won (2nd round)
Nicos Anastasiades (Democratic Assembly, DISY)	200 591	45.46	236 965	57.48
Stavros Malas (Progressive Workers' Party, AKEL)	118 755	26.91	175 267	42.52
Giorgos Lillikas (Movement for social-democracy, EDEK)	109 996	24.93		
Giorgos Charalambous (People's National Front, ELAM)	3 899	0.88		
Praxoula Antoniadou (United Democrats, EDI)	2 678	0.61		
Makaria-Andri Stylianou (independent)	1 898	0.43		
Lakis Ioannou (People's Socialist Movement, LASOK)	1 278	0.29		
Solon Gregoriou (independent)	792	0.18		
Kostas Kyriacou (independent)	722	0.16		
Andreas Efstratiou (independent)	434	0.10		
Loukas Stavrou (independent)	213	0.05		

Source : http://results.elections.moi.gov.cy/English/PRESIDENTIAL_ELECTIONS_2013/Islandwide & http://results.elections.moi.gov.cy/English/PRESIDENTIAL__EPANALIPTIKI_EKLOGI_ELECTIONS_2013/Islandwide

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