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### Chipre

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# Chipre

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Na República de Chipre, país membro União Europeia desde 2004, foram realizadas eleições legislativas a 30 de Maio de 2021 quando havia já passado pouco mais de um ano da declaração da pandemia Covid-19, pela Organização Mundial de Saúde (OMS).

Analisando a taxa de abstenção, verificamos que a mesma reflete uma subida muito ligeira, especialmente no âmbito de uma avaliação da mesma considerando as duas eleições anteriores à declaração de pandemia pela OMS. Pese embora constatem uma subida de 1,02% em 2021 relativamente a 2016, não podemos analisar esta percentagem sem ter em conta que o número de eleitores registados subiu de 543.186 em 2016, para 557.836 em 2021, o que, em termos absolutos, totaliza mais 14.650 eleitores<sup>3/4</sup>. Assim, e tendo em atenção o objectivo do presente artigo devemos desde já assinalar que não se verificam oscilações dignas de realce, entre as taxas de abstenção registadas em 2021 e em 2016. Na realidade, a abstenção em 2021 vem apenas confirmar a tendência de crescimento abstencionista já registado em 2016, ano em que, de facto, se assistiu a uma considerável queda de participação eleitoral face ao que tinha ocorrido em 2011 (ver quadro).

Poder-se-ia, ainda assim, considerar que a pandemia seria responsável pelo ligeiro aumento de abstencionistas, mas nada nos impediria, igualmente, de considerar que tal se devia ao facto do voto ter deixado de ser obrigatório<sup>5</sup>. Por outro lado poder-se-ia também

referir que a abstenção se tinha devido ao desagrado da população face a grandes casos de corrupção envolvendo altas figuras do Estado cipriota<sup>6</sup>. Contudo, atendendo aos dados conhecidos, nada nos pode conduzir a indicar a pandemia como a causadora desta curta diferença de abstencionistas face à penúltima eleição legislativa.

Quanto a medidas específicas tendentes a facilitar o exercício do direito de voto (ou à sua ausência), temos de destacar a posição expressa pela missão da OSCE, nomeadamente dos observadores da ODIHR, que teve lugar entre os dias 15 e 18 de Fevereiro de 2021. Esses observadores foram destacados para Chipre, para fazerem uma observação prévia com o propósito de identificar questões a colmatar no âmbito das eleições que se avizinhavam. E no seu relatório preliminar, os observadores concluíram que, contrariamente ao que já havia sido recomendado, não estavam asseguradas mesas de voto em hospitais, lares de terceira idade, nem para voto móvel, nomeadamente através da deslocação da urna de voto até ao domicílio dos eleitores. Acrescia, ainda, que não estavam ajustados os procedimentos necessários para que doentes com Covid-19, familiares destes em isolamento, ou ainda para os que estavam em autoisolamento pudessem votar. Não deixaram, porém, de constatar que estavam previstas diligências a serem desenvolvidas entre o Ministério da Saúde e os partidos políticos, para que tudo pudesse ser providenciado e resolvido até ao dia das eleições<sup>7</sup>.

Na sequência das recomendações constantes no relatório anterior-

mento desta obrigação legal não implicava, há mais de 20 anos, qualquer consequência. As declarações do ministro cipriota estão disponíveis in <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/05/31/government-abolishes-compulsory-voting/> (acesso em 18.03.2022).

- 6 Referimo-nos à atribuição do estatuto de cidadania a cidadãos estrangeiros, atribuição essa minada por um elaborado esquema de corrupção, que conduziu à demissão, por exemplo, do Presidente da Casa dos Representantes, o Parlamento Cipriota. Veja-se a este propósito a divulgação feita pela imprensa, neste caso particular pela DW News, um programa global de notícias e informações em inglês da emissora pública internacional alemã Deutsche Welle, recorrendo à auscultação de cidadãos comuns, disponível in <https://www.dw.com/en/amid-corruption-and-division-greek-cypriots-to-elect-new-parliament/a-57699702> (acesso a 18.03.2022).
- 7 A este respeito encontramos no Relatório de Missão de Avaliação de Necessidades da OSCE, efectuada entre os dias 15 e 18 de Fevereiro de 2021, com relatório preliminar produzido a 18.03.2021, a seguinte observação: “*Contrary to a previous ODIHR recommendation, the law does not provide for the establishment of polling stations in hospitals, retirement homes or for mobile voting. The MoI informed the ODIHR NAM that in consultation with the Ministry of Health it is developing adjustments to election day procedures, and participation of voters with COVID-19, their family members and those in selfisolation.*”, disponível in: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/481552.pdf> (acesso a 18.03.2022)

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- 3 A este propósito consultar cf. Vieira, S., Simões, J. (2022). «Eleições legislativas de Chipre (30 de Maio de 2021)», in *Polis*, n.º 3 (2021), pp. 181–184, disponível in <https://doi.org/10.34628/fz8c-hr67> (acesso em 18.03.2022).
- 4 Sobre a evolução da participação eleitoral em Chipre é relevante o estudo desenvolvido pelo Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Disponível in <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/90/40> (acesso a 27.03.2022)
- 5 É de sublinhar, a este respeito, que para Constantinos Petrides, Ministro do Interior, a abolição do voto obrigatório não iria ter qualquer impacto no aumento da abstenção, uma vez que apesar do voto ter sido legalmente obrigatório, o incumprimento

mente aludido, foram então introduzidas medidas especiais para levar a cabo a eleição em contexto de pandemia, medidas essas explicadas detalhadamente pelo Ministro do Interior<sup>8</sup>. Foi dada a devida formação a quem estava alocado às mesas de voto por forma a ficarem conscientes dos procedimentos especiais e inéditos a adotar no quadro de pandemia que se vive. Assim, de entre as medidas adotadas, para além das que podemos considerar usuais como uso de máscara, desinfeção das mãos e distanciamento de dois metros, foi providenciado o voto móvel a pessoas com Covid-19, por via da deslocação das urnas até casa dos doentes mediante inscrição prévia efectuada pelos mesmos<sup>9</sup>, inscrição essa que se constatou ter fraca adesão<sup>10</sup>, bem como a hospitais. Relativamente aos casos de cidadãos que tiveram contacto próximo com casos positivos de Covid-19 e que em razão dessa circunstância estavam obrigados a estar em isolamento à data das eleições, foi-lhes permitida a deslocação às mesas de voto por forma a poderem exercer o seu direito constitucional<sup>11</sup>. Refira-se, por último, que para ser possível colocar em prática a deslocação dos delegados das mesas de voto e polícias a casa dos infetados e aos hospitais, foram introduzidas alterações à “Lei da Quarentena”<sup>12</sup>, alterações essas que constam do Decreto Administrativo do Ministério da Saúde, a que já fizemos referência. Podemos assim concluir que os valores da abstenção nas eleições de

2021, mais concretamente a sua manutenção face a 2016, são um reflexo da tendência crescente que se constata ao longo das eleições ora analisadas. Circunstância que em Chipre, no caso recente, se relaciona mais com razões de natureza estritamente política do que com razões directamente relacionadas com a pandemia.

CHIPRE

Tipo de eleição	Ano da Eleição	Taxa de Abstenção
Legislativas	2021	34.28%
	2016	33.26%
	2011	21.3%

Fonte: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/90/40>

- 8 As declarações detalhadas, cujos pontos essenciais são enumerados na sequência do texto, podem ser encontradas na página do Ministério do Interior do Governo da República de Chipre onde se encontra na íntegra a declaração feita em conferência de imprensa, disponível in <http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/moi.nsf/All/3D41BD13D5326B30C22586E5001E4DF1?OpenDocument> (acesso em 27.03.2022)
- 9 Esta medida é referenciada no Relatório Final da OSCE referente ao acompanhamento das eleições de 30.05.2021, elaborado a 15 de Dezembro de 2021, onde é referido: “ In April 2021, the election law was amended to allow voters with confirmed COVID-19 cases and those who are in quarantine to apply for mobile voting. Voters could submit their applications electronically to the GRO by 28 May. After confirming with the Ministry of Health the eligibility for mobile voting, the voter was removed from the regular voter list and was included in a special list for mobile voting. The GRO informed that 91 such applications were received and all were approved. This special voter list was not published for the purpose of the protection of the personal data, but representatives of parties and independent candidates could inspect those lists at a time and place determined by the GRO.”, disponível in [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/5/508379\\_1.pdf](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/5/508379_1.pdf) (acesso em 27.03.2022)
- 10 Em declarações feitas ao jornal “Cyprus Mail” no dia 23 de maio de 2021, Constantinos Petrides, Ministro do Interior, afirmou “Not much interest has been expressed so far; Constantinou said no one had registered by Wednesday”. Disponível in <https://cyprus-mail.com/2021/05/23/coronavirus-election-logistics-to-look-very-different-this-year/> (acesso em 18.03.2022)
- 11 A este respeito veja-se a transcrição do ponto 2.2 do Decreto Administrativo n.º 5537, de 27.05.2021, do Ministério da Saúde: “2.2 Regulation 2.22 of the Quarantine (Determination of Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus) Decrees (No 17) of 2021 is hereby amended by deleting the full stop at the end of the first reservation and replacing it with a colon and with the addition, immediately after, of the following new reservation: “Provided further that on 30 May 2021 close contacts of persons infected with Covid-19 according to the Health Protocol of the Ministry of Health, may exit their place of confinement and go exclusively to the electoral centre for voting purposes”, in GOVERNMENT GAZETTE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, R.A.A. 226/2021, ANNEX III, PART I, REGULATORY ADMINISTRATIVE ACTS. Disponível in [https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/uploads/27052021\\_Decree%20No%2019%20EN.pdf](https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/uploads/27052021_Decree%20No%2019%20EN.pdf) (acesso em 27.03.2022)
- 12 A Lei da Quarentena está disponível in <http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/CAP260.pdf> (acesso em 27.03.2022)

# Cyprus

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The Republic of Cyprus, a member country of the European Union since 2004, had its legislative elections on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, a year had passed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic as declared by the World Health Organization (WHO).

When analysing the abstention rate, we can observe a very slight increase in abstention, especially given the evaluation range, that is, the two previous elections before the start of the pandemic as declared by the WHO. Notwithstanding the rise in 1,02% from 2016 to 2021, we must take into account that the number of registered voters rose from 543.186 in 2016 to 557.836 in 2021 which, in absolute terms, adds more 14.650 voters<sup>3/4</sup>. Therefore, taking into consideration that the objective of this paper, there weren't any noteworthy oscillations between the 2016 and 2021 abstention rates. If anything, the 2021 abstention only serves to confirm the tendency in abstentionist behaviour already registered back in 2016, when the turnout was much lower than in 2011 (see table).

One might yet consider that the pandemic could be responsible for the slight increase in abstention, but we must also take into account that such fact could simply be due to the abolition of compulsory voting<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, one might refer that the abstention was due to the population's dissatisfaction with big corruption cases involving high

members of the Cypriot state<sup>6</sup>. However, given the known data, nothing could lead us to conclude that the pandemic caused this short difference in abstentionists between this and the previous' elections.

On the specific measures taken to facilitate the exercise (or not) of voting rights, we must refer to the OCSE mission's position on the matter, namely the observers from ODIHR who were in Cyprus from 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2021. These observers were assigned to Cyprus with the purpose of identifying relevant issues to be resolved before the coming elections. In their preliminary report, the observers concluded that despite what had been recommended, conditions for voting in hospitals, elderly care homes or mobile ballot boxes to patients' homes hadn't been implemented. Furthermore, the necessary procedures for ensuring that COVID-19 patients, their confined families, or those in self-isolation could cast their votes hadn't yet been adjusted. The report added however, that some measures were to be developed between the Health Ministry and political parties so that everything could be provided for and resolved before the election day<sup>7</sup>.

Following the recommendations in the above-mentioned report, some special measures were implemented regarding the election amidst the pandemic, as specified in detail by the Minister of Interior<sup>8</sup> Those at the polling stations were duly trained so as to be aware of the special procedures to be adopted given the pandemic. Therefore, between all adopted measures, besides the regular measures such as the use of face masks, hand sanitising, and two-meter social distancing, there was also a mobile ballot box for COVID-19 patients, who could vote at

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3 See cf. Vieira, S., Simões, J. (2022). «Eleições legislativas de Chipre (30 de Maio de 2021)», in *Polis*, n.º 3 (2021), pp. 181–184, available at: <https://doi.org/10.34628/tz8e-hr67> (accessed on 18.03.2022, in Portuguese).

4 On the evolution of the turnout in Cyprus, see the study developed by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Available at: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/90/40> (accessed on 27.03.2022)

5 On this matter, we should mention the position of Constantinos Petrides, Minister of Interior, in which the abolition of compulsory vote would not have any impact on the rise of abstention, since notwithstanding the vote being compulsory, the lack of compliance bared no consequence for over 20 years. The minister's declarations can be accessed at: <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/05/31/government-abolishes-compulsory-voting/> (accessed on 18.03.2022).

6 We are referring to the citizenship acquisition for foreign citizens which was abused by an elaborate corruption scheme, leading up to the stepping down of the President of the House of Representatives. On this matter see the communication by DW News, a global news and information publication in English by the German public outlet Deutsche Welle, which inquired common citizens, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/amid-corruption-and-division-greek-cypriots-to-elect-new-parliament/a-57699702> (accessed on 18.03.2022).

7 The OCSE's needs assessment mission report of 15-18 February 2021, with its preliminary report of 18.03.2021, stated the following observation: "Contrary to a previous ODIHR recommendation, the law does not provide for the establishment of polling stations in hospitals, retirement homes or for mobile voting. The MoI informed the ODIHR NAM that in consultation with the Ministry of Health it is developing adjustments to election day procedures, and participation of voters with COVID-19, their family members and those in selfisolation.", available at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/ documents/d/c/481552.pdf> (accessed on 18.03.2022)

8 The detailed specification text and its listed essential points can be found in the webpage of the Minister of Interior of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus at: <http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/moi.nsf/All/3D41BD13D5326B30C22586E5001E4D-F1?OpenDocument> (accessed on 27.03.2022)

home after previously enrolling for this voting method<sup>9</sup>, and to which very few voters did enrol<sup>10</sup>, as well as in hospitals. Regarding those citizens in confinement due to contact with positive COVID-19 cases, these were allowed to go exercise their voting rights in person<sup>11</sup>. Lastly, it is important to mention that in order to implement the circulation of the mobile ballot boxes' polling stations, accompanied by the police to the home of those infected and hospitals, the "Quarantine Law" had to be amended<sup>12</sup>. Such amendments are present under the above-mentioned Administrative Decree of the Health Ministry.

We can therefore conclude that the abstention figures in the 2021 and their similarity to the 2016's elections are a reflex of the tendency seen throughout the various elections under analysis. A situation which in Cyprus is more closely related with reasons of purely political nature than with reasons directly related to the pandemic.

### CYPRUS

Elections	Year	Abstention Rate
Legislative	2021	<b>34.28%</b>
	2016	33.26%
	2011	21.3%

Source: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/90/40>

- 9 This measure is referenced in the Final Report of the OCSE, dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2021, on the elections of 30.05.2021: “*In April 2021, the election law was amended to allow voters with confirmed COVID-19 cases and those who are in quarantine to apply for mobile voting. Voters could submit their applications electronically to the GRO by 28 May. After confirming with the Ministry of Health the eligibility for mobile voting, the voter was removed from the regular voter list and was included in a special list for mobile voting. The GRO informed that 91 such applications were received and all were approved. This special voter list was not published for the purpose of the protection of the personal data, but representatives of parties and independent candidates could inspect those lists at a time and place determined by the GRO.*”, available at: [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/5/508379\\_1.pdf](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/5/508379_1.pdf) (accessed on 27.03.2022).
- 10 In his remarks to the “Cyprus Mail” on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2021, Constantinos Petrides, Minister of Interior, stated: “*Not much interest has been expressed so far; Constantinou said no one had registered by Wednesday*”. Available at <https://cyprus-mail.com/2021/05/23/coronavirus-election-logistics-to-look-very-different-this-year/> (accessed on 18.03.2022)
- 11 See the transcription of point 2.2. of the Administrative Decree no. 5537 of 27.05.2021 of the Minister of Health: “*2.2 Regulation 2.22 of the Quarantine (Determination of Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus) Decrees (No 17) of 2021 is hereby amended by deleting the full stop at the end of the first reservation and replacing it with a colon and with the addition, immediately after, of the following new reservation: “Provided further that on 30 May 2021 close contacts of persons infected with Covid-19 according to the Health Protocol of the Ministry of Health, may exit their place of confinement and go exclusively to the electoral centre for voting purposes”, in GOVERNMENT GAZETTE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, R.A.A. 226/2021, ANNEX III, PART I, REGULATORY ADMINISTRATIVE ACTS. Available at: [https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/uploads/27052021\\_Decree%20No%2019%20EN.pdf](https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/uploads/27052021_Decree%20No%2019%20EN.pdf) (accessed on 27.03.2022)*
- 12 The “Quarantine Law” can be accessed at <http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/CAP260.pdf> (accessed on 27.03.2022)