

Island Communities: Turkish Cyprus

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NOTE: Many of the earlier Turkish Cypriot stamp illustrations depict stamps overprinted ÖRNEK which is Turkish for SPECIMEN



The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti - KKTC) has an area of 1295 square miles and a population of around 330.000. It is a de facto independent state in the northeast of Cyprus, recognized by Turkey only. The Turkish Cypriot Republic controls around 36% of the total area of Cyprus.



When Cyprus became independent in 1960, both the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus agreed to support an independent Cyprus with apportioned official positions between the two communities. However, tension between the two communities developed in the following three years, and in 1963, constitutional changes effectively concentrated power to the Greek community.



1960 Cypriot independence, inscriptions in Greek and Turkish only (Cyprus Sc. 200)

In December 1963, intercommunal violence broke out with Greek Cypriot attacks on Turkish communities. The Turkish Cypriot population was forced to live in protected villages, and in December 1967, a Turkish Cypriot Provisional Administration was established.

In January 1964, the Turkish Cypriot community organised its own postal service, and initially used special handstamps inscribed Turkish Cypriot Posts cancelling Republic of Cyprus stamps. This practice only lasted until end-March-early-April 1964.



1964 Turkish Cypriot Postal Service postmark, on cover

The 25th anniversary of the Turkish-Cypriot postal service was commemorated on a 1989 stamp.

At the same time, a stamp commemorating the 25th anniversary of the inter-community fighting in Kokkina/Erenköy was issued. The

50th anniversary of the Turkish resistance here was commemorated on a 2014 stamp.

In 2003, the 40th anniversary of the Turkish-Cypriot Posts was commemorated on two stamps, and in 2013, the 50th anniversary with three stamps, all showing envelopes where the stamps had been cancelled by the 1964 handstamps.



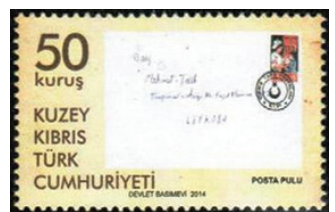
Left, 1989 25th anniversary of Turkish Cypriot Postal Service



Top right, 1989 25th anniversary of Erenköy Uprising (Sc. 252); bottom right, 2014 50th anniversary of Erenköy Uprising (Sc. 768)



Left, 2003 40th anniversary of Turkish Cypriot Postal Service (Sc. 577)



Right, 2014 50th anniversary of Turkish Cypriot Postal Service

In 1970, the Turkish Cypriot Postal Service released two stamps called Social Aid, to raise funds for social issues, but they were also used as postage stamps. There was no denomination printed on them, but they displayed one or three five leaf clovers (corresponding to 5 or 15 mils). They were cancelled with thin bars (to avoid confiscation from Greek Cypriot authorities) but date stamps were applied to the envelopes away from the stamps.



1970 Turkish Cypriot postage stamps camouflaged as Social Aid stamps: 5 mils stamp on cover

The postal validity of these two stamps was acknowledged on one of the three stamps issued 1980 to commemorate the centenary of Cypriot stamps (the two others feature one of the 1880 CYPRIUS overprints on British stamps, and one of the 1960 stamps issued to celebrate Cyprus' independence).

1980 centenary of Cypriot postage stamp, top value depicts 5 mils Social Aid stamp (Sc. 92)



In 1973, the Turkish Cypriot Postal Service released a set of seven stamps celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Turkish Republic. They were inscribed “Turkish Community” in Turkish. Initially only valid within the Turkish Cypriot enclaves, in 1975 they became valid throughout the Turkish occupied areas of North Cyprus.



1973, internationally valid from July 27, 1974 50th anniversary of Republic of Turkey, Turkish Cypriot Postal Service issue (Sc. 1/7)

The 1960 independence agreement made Britain, Greece and Turkey guarantors for the apportioning of the country. A coup, supported by the Greek military junta ousted the President of (Greek) Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios on July 15, 1974. He was replaced by Nikos Sampson, a supporter of union with Greece (Enosis) and the “Hellenic Republic of Cyprus” was proclaimed. To prevent the union with Greece and the possible deportation of the Turkish Cypriot population, Turkey invaded Cyprus July 20, 1974 and occupied around 36% of the area of the island. Archbishop Makarios returned to power, and in 1975, there was a population exchange whereby Greek Cypriots in the north were exchanged for Turkish Cypriots living in the south.

The UN Security Council condemned the Turkish action, and the Republic of Cyprus overprinted four stamps to publicize the UN resolution.

Ten years later, in 1984, the Republic of Cyprus issued two stamps condemning their violation of human rights and the huge number of Greek Cypriot refugees from the Turkish occupied Northern Cyprus to the south.



1984 Republic of Cyprus issue for the 10th anniversary of the Turkish invasion and creation of internal refugees (Sc. Cyprus 631-32)

Already in 1974, the Republic of Cyprus issued the first of its many refugee obligatory tax stamps, and in 1999, some of these were depicted on a souvenir sheet issued for the 25th anniversary of the Turkish occupation of the north and focusing on the many Greek Cypriots that were forced to flee from their homes there. (Photo, next column.)

On February 13, 1975, the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus was proclaimed. The intention was that the Greek and Turkish communities form a federation of two ethnic states, but the Greek Cypriots did not respond to the Turkish initiative.



1999 Republic of Cyprus issue for the 25th anniversary of the Turkish invasion and creation of internal refugees and introduction of an obligatory refugee tax on mail (Sc. Cyprus 940)

Two of the 1973 stamps celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Turkish Republic were overprinted “Kıbrıs Türk Federale Devleti 13.2.1975” to mark the establishment of the Turkish Cypriot state, and were released March 3, 1975.

Already on April 21, 1975, a pictorial definitive set printed in Turkey was released with the new title, but where KIBRIS (Cyprus) is standing alone while the rest of the title appears in small letters.



1975 establishment of Turkish Federal Republic of Cyprus (Sc. 8-9)



1974 Republic of Cyprus stamps overprinted for the UN Security Council Resolution condemning the Turkish invasion of Cyprus (Sc. Cyprus 427)



Cyprus 1975 definitive series (Sc. 10-22, less 1, 14, 16)

In July 1975, three stamps with a peace theme were issued, and the last 1975 issue was a Europa issue. Turkish Cyprus is not a member of the European Postal Cooperation or the Universal Postal Union, but Turkey acts as a transit country based on article 4 of the Universal Postal Convention and the stamps of Turkish Cyprus are therefore valid throughout the world.



Left, 1975 “Peace on Cyprus” (Sc. 24); right, 1975 Europa stamp (Sc. 26)



“Article 4 Exceptional relations: Member countries whose designated operators provide a service with territories not included in the Union are bound to act as intermediaries for other member countries. The provisions of the Convention and its Regulations shall be applicable

to such exceptional relations.”

In the accompanying explanatory notes it is also said that:

“This prov(ision) regulates the relations of member countries with countries or territories which are not part of the UPU within the meaning of article 3, but which maintain postal relations with a member country on the basis of a bilateral Agr(eement).

(This article is also the reason why the stamps of Nagorno-Karabakh and of Abkhazia are also valid on international mail).

Incoming mail to Turkish Cyprus must be addressed via Turkey.”



Above, 1976 Liberation monument (Sc. 39); Right: 1977 Turkish landmarks in Cyprus (Sc. 47-48)

One of the 1976 issues was two stamps showing the Liberation monument, celebrating the so-called liberation of the Turkish communities of Cyprus by Turkey in 1974.

A 1977 set of four stamps focused on the Turkish heritage of Cyprus, showing buildings and constructions from the period of Ottoman rule over Cyprus.



In 1978, Turkish Cyprus changed from Cypriot pounds to Turkish lira (TL), and one of the 1978 stamp series was a three-stamp set for the swearing of the National Oath for the Turkish Cypriot population. There were also three stamps portraying Turkish national hero Kemal Atatürk.



Left, 1978 National Oath (Sc. 61); right, 1978 Kemal Atatürk (Sc. 63-65)

1979 started with surcharges in Turkish lira on 1976 stamps, followed by a souvenir sheet celebrating the 5th anniversary of the Turkish “Peace Operation”. The designs of the 1979 Europa stamps included an Ottoman stamp postmarked in Cyprus, a Cypriot stamp cancelled with the 1963 Turkish Cypriot Post stamp and a 1973 stamp postmarked in Girne (Kyrenia).



Above, 1979 currency change surcharges (Sc. 65); right, 1979 5th anniversary of Turkish “Peace Operation” (invasion) (Sc. 70); 1979 Europa stamps, showing Turkish stamp postmarked on Cyprus and stamps postmarked by Turkish Cypriot Postal Service (Sc. 71-72)



Left, 1980 Islamic conferences and Islamic Year 1400 AH (Sc. 81); center, 1980 historic landmarks (Sc. 89); right, 1981 World Muslim Conference statement (solidarity with Turkish Cyprus) (Sc. 96)

In 1980, Turkish Cyprus hosted the 8th General Assembly of the World Islam Congress and issued three stamps with Islam themes for it.

A definitive series depicting historical buildings was released in June 1980, and in August the centenary of Cyprus stamps was commemorated with three stamps.

A pair of 1981 stamps gave tribute to the solidarity towards the Turkish Cypriot state by other Islamic countries.



2010 34th anniversary of membership of Turkish Cyprus in World Islamic Conference (Sc. 682)

In 2010, the 34th anniversary of North Cyprus’ membership in the World Islam Congress was commemorated with two stamps.

As the Turkish Cypriot state still considers itself a state within the Republic of Cyprus, a Commonwealth member, Turkish Cyprus in 1981 issued a stamp for the Royal marriage between Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer (and in 1986 two further British royalty stamps celebrated the marriage of Prince Andrew and Miss Sarah Ferguson and the 60th birth of Queen Elizabeth II, in 2011 a single stamp was issued for the marriage of Prince William and Miss Kate Middleton and in 2012 a single stamp for the 60th accession anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II).



Above left, 1981 Wedding of Prince Charles & Lady Diana Spencer (Sc. 113); above right, 1986 Wedding of Prince Andrew & Sarah Ferguson; right, 2011 Wedding of Prince William & Catherine Middleton (Sc. 711)



2012 60th Accession Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II (Sc. 726)

In 1983, the 25th anniversary of the Turkish Cypriot militia was commemorated with three stamps. In November 1983, the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus was replaced by the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti, abbreviated KKTC). Four stamps of a 1981 Flowers definitive were overprinted with the new title and the date November 15, 1983. (See page 4.)



1983 25th anniversary of Turkish Cypriot resistance (Sc. 131)

Until 1981, all stamps of Turkish Cyprus were printed by various printing houses in Turkey, but in 1982, the local Tezel Offset produced the first locally printed stamps: the 1982 Europa souvenir

sheet. During 1982-83, there were issues printed either in Turkey or by Tezel, but from 1984 and until 1990, all stamps of North Cyprus were printed by Tezel.

Tenders for stamp production from 1991 were invited in early 1991, and another local company, Bolan Offset, produced stamp-like labels to prove their ability to print postage stamps. These labels were made available on the market. They are alternately inscribed "Nord Zypern – Urlaubsland" (German for North Cyprus – Vacation Land) or "Visit Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" and show flowers and touristic sites.



1981 printing essays by Bolan Offset

In the end, the Government Printer was awarded the contract for producing stamps, and since 1991, all stamps have been printed by them. The Government Printer was founded in 1975, and in 1995, its 20th anniversary was commemorated on a stamp.

The first stamp with the new title were the 1984 Europa stamps, followed by three stamps for the Los Angeles Summer Olympics and two stamps for the 10th anniversary of the Turkish "Peace Operation" (invasion of Cyprus).



Top row: 1995 20th anniversary of Government Printing Office (Sc. 400); 1984 Europa stamp (first issue with new country title) (Sc. 142); Bottom row: 1984 Los Angeles Olympics (Sc. 145); 1984 10th anniversary of Turkish invasion/peace operation (Sc. 149)

The first anniversary of the republic was also celebrated with two 1984 stamps. In 1988, a souvenir sheet celebrated the 5th anniversary of the



1988 5th anniversary of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Sc. 241)

republic, and the 10th anniversary was commemorated with four 1993 stamps.

1993 10th anniversary of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Sc. 353)



1983 Proclamation of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Sc. 138-41)

The 20th anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus was remembered on four 1994 stamps.

In 1998, the 15th anniversary of the republic was commemorated with a single stamp and two stamps in a souvenir sheet, and in 1999, the 25th anniversary of the Turkish invasion was remembered on two stamps. The 20th



1994 20th anniversary of Turkish intervention (Sc. 368-71)



1998 15th anniversary of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Sc. 476)



2008 25th anniversary of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Sc. 664)



2013 30th anniversary of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Sc. 752)



1999 25th anniversary of Turkish intervention (Sc. 485-86)



2003 20th anniversary of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Sc. 573b)



Left, 1980 Republic of Cyprus, 20th anniversary of independence, Archbishop Makarios on the left;

Right, 1994 10th death anniversary of Kucuk (Sc. 363)

anniversary of the republic was commemorated on a 2003 stamp, the 25th anniversary on a 2008 stamp and the 30th anniversary on a 2013 stamp.

In 1985, the first death anniversary of Turkish-Cypriot politician Fazıl Küçük, who was Vice-President of Cyprus 1959-73, was remembered on two stamps. In 1980 he was included in a Republic of Cyprus stamp commemorating the 20th anniversary of Cypriot independence and depicting the signing of the treaty



of independence, where he signed on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot community. He was also commemorated on a Turkish Cypriot 1994 stamp on the 10th anniversary of his death and in 1999 on the 15th anniversary. He was again remembered on a 2006 stamp on his 100th birth anniversary, and he was included in a 2011 series portraying former leading politicians of the Turkish-Cypriot community.



2012 Death of Rauf Denktaş, president of the Turkish Cypriot state and republic 1976-2005

Denktaş died and was remembered on four stamps issued in a souvenir sheet.

In 1987, the Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal visited North Cyprus and a stamp portraying him and Turkish-Cypriot President Rauf Denktaş was issued to mark the visit. In 1988, three stamps commemorated this and visits by previous Turkish Prime Ministers to North Cyprus, Bülent Ecevit, Bülent Ulusu and Özal. In 1990, the Turkish President Kenan Evren visited North Cyprus, also commemorated on a stamp, and the same year, the Turkish Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut visited, a visit again commemorated on a stamp.

The Turkish President Süleyman Demirel visited North Cyprus in 1995 and his visit was honored with a stamp. He came back in 1997 along with the Turkish Prime Minister Necmeddin Erbakan and their visit was marked with two stamps. Another Turkish Prime Minister, Mesut Yılmaz and again President Demirel came to North Cyprus in 1998 and both their visits and the visit of former Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit were marked with stamps. Yet another Turkish President, Ahmet N. Sezer was portrayed on a 2000 stamp for his visit to North Cyprus.



Left, 1995 visit of Turkish President Suleyman Demirel (right) (Sc. 395)
Right, 1998 visit by Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz (Sc. 462)

Former Turkish-Cypriot Prime Minister Mustafa Çağatay (in office 1978-83) died in 1989 and a 1991 stamp commemorated the second anniversary of his death.

A Geneva peace conference for Cyprus was convened in 1988 and a stamp depicting the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Georgios Vassilou and the Turkish-Cypriot president Rauf Denktaş along with UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar was released to commemorate this unsuccessful conference.



1989 Geneva Peace Summit (Sc. 247, de Cuellar, center)



1991 2nd anniversary of former Turkish-Cypriot Prime Minister Mustafa Çağatay (Sc. 310)

1987 visit of Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal (right, with KKTC President Denktaş) (Sc. 216)

1990 visit of Turkish President Kenan Evren (Sc. 283)

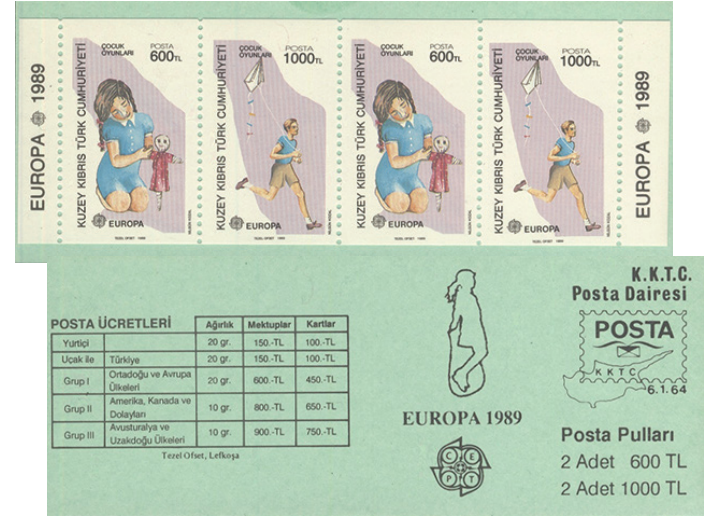
In 2012, the former President of North Cyprus, Rauf Denktaş

In 1995, a 1000 lira obligatory tax stamp for the forest fire damages was issued. A similar 50,000 lira stamp was issued for fiscal use only.



1995 Forest Fire victims postal tax stamp (Sc. RA1) and similar larger stamp for fiscal purposes

North Cyprus has also issued a few stamp booklets and in 2003, a set of three pre-stamped envelopes with tourism motifs and a few postal cards, including a 2011 set of five pictorial cards with historic monuments as motifs.



Stamp booklet: 1989 Europa (Sc. 246a)

The European Union decided in 2000 that Cyprus could become a member, and it was hoped that the prospect of EU membership would ease a reunion of the island. But when Cyprus joined the European Union May 1, 2004, it was without North Cyprus. There had been a referendum on a peace settlement ahead of the entry in both the Greek and Turkish parts of the island. In North Cyprus, 65% of the voters accepted the unification proposal, whereas 75% of the Greek population rejected it.



1981 postal card for birth centenary of Kemal Atatürk; Bottom, 2011 pictorial postal card