

Cyprus bans entry to non-residents over virus fears: President

March 13 2020



Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades announced a string of new measures against the novel coronavirus

Cyprus announced Friday it would ban entry to non-residents for fifteen days to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus on the Mediterranean island.

From Sunday, only Cypriots, [legal residents](#), diplomats, registered students and specific authorised people will be admitted to the country, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades announced.

He asked Cypriots abroad not to travel back to Cyprus unnecessarily.

All private and public educational institutions will remain closed until April 10.

Anastasiades said restrictions at crossing points on the divided island's ceasefire line would remain in place, asking Cypriots to cross only for "necessary trips".

The island is divided between areas controlled by EU member state the Republic of Cyprus and the northern third controlled by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognised only by Ankara.

In total they have reported 26 COVID-19 cases, including five in the north.

Anastasiades called for "collective responsibility" and "[mutual respect](#)" in responding to the threat of the pandemic.

The Republic of Cyprus has already banned indoor gatherings of more than 75 people.

It has cancelled football matches for the rest of March.

"I want to be clear: No one is above or can be excluded from abiding by what has been decided," the president said.

But Cyprus has not restricted imports or exports, Anastasiades added.

"The measures do not affect the unhindered commercial activity of the country," he said. "For this reason, panic is not justified."

The holiday island is heavily dependent on tourism, welcoming millions of visitors per year.

"I acknowledge the measures... affect and disrupt the daily life of us all. But there is no other choice," Anastasiades said.

The measures taken were in line with recommendations from the European Union and the World Health Organization, he said.

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