

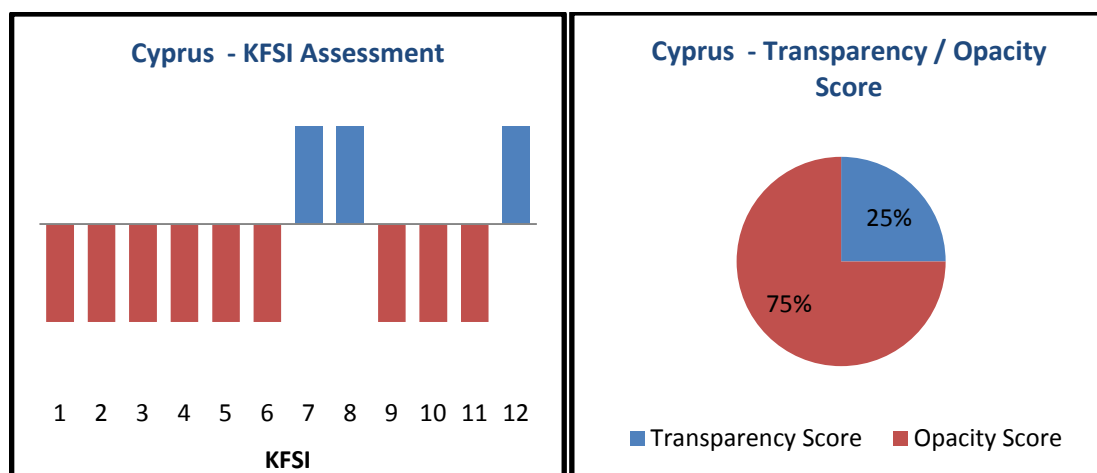
## Jurisdiction Report - Cyprus

### Purpose of this paper

This paper draws on key data collected on the secrecy jurisdiction of Cyprus. The full data set is available [here](#)<sup>1</sup>. Background information about Cyprus is available from a number of sources<sup>2</sup>. The assessment provided in this paper relates to 12 indicators reflecting the legal and financial arrangements of this jurisdiction (Key Financial Secrecy Indicators, KFSI). Details of these indicators are noted at the end of this report. The detailed data that supports this analysis is available on the Mapping the Faultlines web site<sup>3</sup>. This survey was based on regulatory reports, legislation and regulation in force at 31.12.2008<sup>4</sup>.

### Key findings

Cyprus achieved a positive result for just three of the questions we asked. A transparency score of 25 per cent has been awarded for the positive assessment of indicator number 7, 8 and 9. The negative assessment of all other indicators yields an opacity score of 75 per cent overall.



The numbers on the bottom axis of the left graph refer to the Key Financial Secrecy Indicators (KFSI) listed at the end of this report. The presence of a blue bar indicates a positive answer as does blue highlighted text in the analysis, below. The presence of a red bar indicates a negative answer as does red highlighted text below.

This weak opacity score arises because Cyprus:

1. Provides **banking secrecy**;
2. Does not put **details of trusts on public record**;
3. Does not comply sufficiently with **international regulatory requirements**
4. Does not require that **company accounts be available on public record**;
5. Does not require that **beneficial ownership of companies is recorded on public record**;

6. Does not maintain **company ownership details in official records**;
7. **Did respond to both of Tax Justice Network's requests for information**;
8. **Participates in the European Union Savings Tax Directive**;
9. Has few **tax information agreements**;
10. Does not have **adequate access to banking information**;
11. Allows **company redomiciliation**;
12. **Does not allow protected cell companies**.

#### Other data<sup>5</sup>

	Number	Ranking <sup>6</sup>
Financial services as a percentage of GDP	6%	29
Number of multinational company subsidiaries in the jurisdiction	69	19
Number of Big 4 firms in the jurisdiction	4	-
Number of lawyers in the jurisdiction	1810	10
Number of accountants in the jurisdiction	2520	9

#### This data shows

1. That Cyprus does have a significant dependence<sup>7</sup> upon financial services;
2. That Cyprus is widely used<sup>8</sup> by multinational companies from the jurisdictions that we surveyed<sup>9</sup>, suggesting that it is considered significantly attractive by those corporations which are usually associated with low or no tax jurisdictions exhibiting political stability;
3. That the Big Four accounting firms do have a significant presence<sup>10</sup> in Cyprus, suggesting that it does host significant international activity;
4. That Cyprus does exhibit a significant number<sup>11</sup> of accountants when compared to other secrecy jurisdictions, suggesting the relative significance of its activities.

#### Particular points to note

The company registry can be searched online, but results are limited to the company's name, status of company, type of company, and the date of registration. According to the IMF, the registry additionally contains and provides to the public - but only for *in situ* inspection - the shareholders' and directors' names and the address of the company's registered office (IMF 2007<sup>12</sup>: 6-7). The answers to the TJN-Survey 2009 suggest that for limited companies the identity of company officers and beneficial owners as well as the constitution are available on physical record on Cyprus. However, OCRA explains that the public shareholder information is not reliable: "The identity of the beneficial owners of a Cyprus Company may remain confidential if corporate shareholders are engaged to act as the shareholder on behalf of the ultimate beneficial owners." (OCRA<sup>13</sup>). The OECD corroborates that beneficial ownership information needs not be registered (OECD 2007<sup>14</sup>:

119). The IMF reports that the Memorandum and Articles of Association are not on public record (IMF 2007: 6-7).

In addition, no information regarding the performance of the European Union Savings Tax Directive has been submitted to the EU-Commission for its first evaluation in September 2008 (EUC 200815: 6).

### Next steps for Cyprus

Cyprus is a long way from offering financial transparency<sup>16</sup>. If it is to play a full part in the modern financial community and wishes to impede and deter illicit financial flows, including flows originating from tax evasion, aggressive tax avoidance practices, corrupt practices and criminal activities it should take action on the points noted where it falls short of acceptable international standards.

### The indicators we used (KFSI)

1	Is legal banking secrecy banned (i.e. Is there no legal right to banking secrecy)?
2	Is there a Public Trust and Foundations Registry?
3	Does the FATF rate 90% largely compliant and with no non-compliant ratings?
4	Are company accounts available for inspection by anyone for a fee of less than US\$10?
5	Are details of the beneficial ownership of companies available on public record online for less than US\$10?
6	Are details of the beneficial ownership of companies submitted to and kept updated by a competent authority?
7	Did the jurisdiction participate in the TJN Survey in 2009 (1=both questionnaires; 0.5 one questionnaire)?
8	Does the jurisdiction fully participate in Automatic Information Exchange (the European Savings Tax Directive)?
9	Has the jurisdiction at least 60 bilateral treaties providing for broad information exchange clauses covering all tax matters (either DTA or TIEA)?
10	Has the jurisdiction's authority effective access to bank information for information exchange purposes?
11	Does the jurisdiction prevent company redomiciliation?
12	Does the jurisdiction prevent protected cell companies from being created in its territory?

<sup>1</sup> That data is available here: [http://www.secrecyjurisdictions.com/sj\\_database/menu.xml](http://www.secrecyjurisdictions.com/sj_database/menu.xml).

<sup>2</sup> CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>; 28-8-09; Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus>; 28-9-09.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.secrecyjurisdictions.com>.

<sup>4</sup> With the exception of KFSI 9 for which the cut-off date is 30-6-2009.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the jurisdiction database on this site or TJN research.

<sup>6</sup> The number of ranked jurisdictions varies for each indicator mainly because of differing data availability. For the ranking of the ratio of Financial Services in GDP this number is 29; for the number of multinational companies' subsidiaries this number is 54; for lawyers the number is 25 and for accountants 26.

<sup>7</sup> We defined significant dependence as a ratio of more than 5% of financial services in GDP.

<sup>8</sup> We defined „widely used“ and „significant attraction“ as being indicated by the presence of 50 or more subsidiaries of multinational companies.

<sup>9</sup> France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK, USA.

<sup>10</sup> We defined that the presence of the Big Four Accounting Firm is significant if there is more than one firm present.

<sup>11</sup> For defining a “significant” number of lawyers and accountants we used the ratio of lawyers and accountants per head of population, computed the average and defined the numbers above average to indicate relative significance in the secrecy jurisdictions' activity.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2007/cr0777.pdf>; 9-9-09.

<sup>13</sup> [http://documents.ocra.com/jurisdiction/europe/Cyprus\\_Information.pdf](http://documents.ocra.com/jurisdiction/europe/Cyprus_Information.pdf); 23.2.2009.

<sup>14</sup> The full title of this annual publication is “Tax Co-operation. Towards a Level Playing Field”. Because the OECD published its 2008 report during the research process, both the 2007 and 2008 report have been used.

<sup>15</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/resources/documents/taxation/personal\\_tax/savings\\_tax/savings\\_directive\\_review/pres\\_savingsreport.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/personal_tax/savings_tax/savings_directive_review/pres_savingsreport.pdf); 17-9-08.

<sup>16</sup> Our definition of financial transparency can be found here: [www.secrecyjurisdictions.com/PDF/Glossary.pdf](http://www.secrecyjurisdictions.com/PDF/Glossary.pdf).