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DISSERTATION

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THE ENERGY RESOURCES OF THE EASTERN
MEDITERRANEAN. THE ROLE OF TURKEY.

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*This dissertation
Is dedicated to my family*

The Energy Resources of Eastern Mediterranean.

The role of Turkey

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**Key Words: Eastern Mediterranean, Energy Resources,
Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Israel**

SUMMARY

This thesis through its pages will firstly outline the energy profile of both the Eastern Mediterranean countries and the region, and secondly, the key role of Turkey in the outcome of the issues raised at the bilateral level with neighboring countries. In the energy equation of the eastern Mediterranean, Turkey is perhaps the most important variable in this sensitive chord as bilateral relations with countries - actors in the region have tried quite a few / several times before. The situation so far shows the strong interest of Turkey for participation and pooling of reserves. The practical economic gain (and not only) this process remains to be seen from the negotiations that followed between both countries and international organizations.

Πίνακας περιχομένων

Prologue	5
The Energy identity of Eastern Mediterranean	6
GREECE	7
CYPRUS	9
LEBANON	10
ISRAEL	11
PALESTINE-GAZA STRIP	12
EGYPT	12
SYRIA	13
TURKEY	14
Recent developments in Eastern Mediterranean	15
Relationships of Turkey with the regional countries	16
Turkey and Israel	17
Turkey and Cyprus	21
Greek-Turkish relations	26
EPILOGUE	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	35
FOREIGN	35
GREEK	38
OFFICIAL WEBSITES	39
REPORTS	40
NEWSPAPERS	41

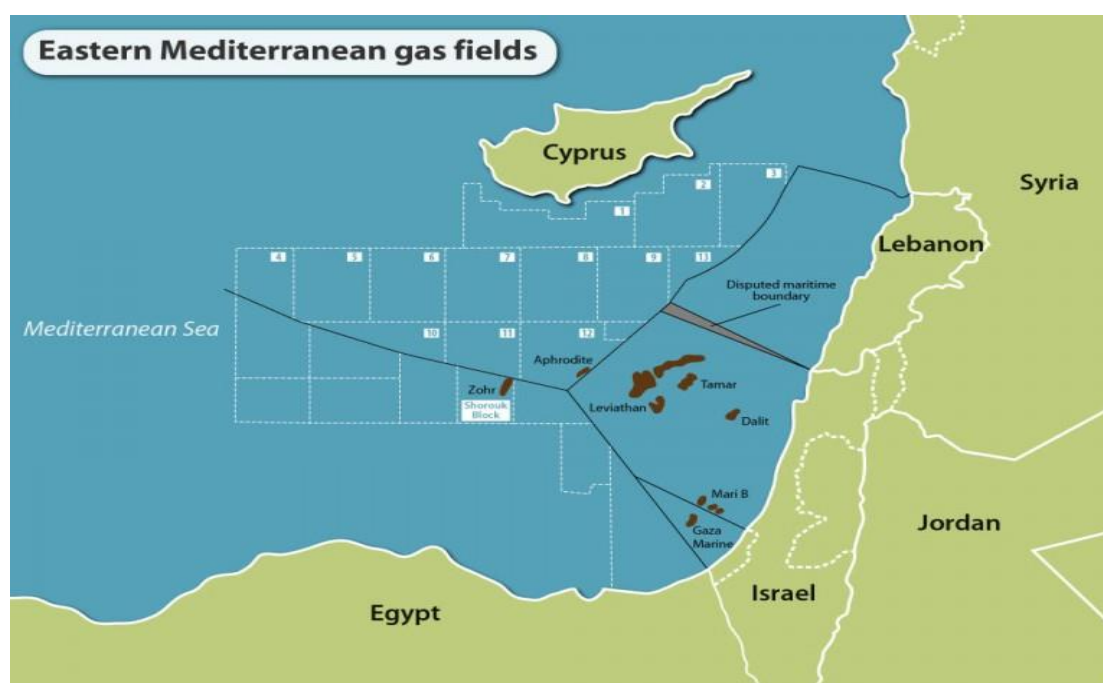
Prologue

The recent discoveries hydrocarbon deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean showed once again that global energy production can be determined increasingly by democratic countries friendly to the international order and particularly to liberal democracies. In the near future, the developments of strategic stocks of Eastern Mediterranean will offer energy independence to Israel and relief from existing, hard economic restrictions in Cyprus and Greece, both member states of the European Union. It is also possible to strengthen regional stability and security, part of which is the security of an increasingly vulnerable Turkey's political and strategic position of which as a member of the Atlantic Alliance has been questioned. The creation and expansion of a secure energy field which will be included Greece, will enable Europe to purchase electricity directly from the Eastern Mediterranean, making it less vulnerable to Russian pressure. The use of economic and geostrategic advantages of Eastern Mediterranean requires an agent that does not exist today: political stability and security. The region as a whole has entered a prolonged conflict and instability. The old world order collapsed due to the effects of the so-called Arab Spring and the deterioration of relations between the two major US allies in the region, Turkey and Israel. Indeed, the previous June the two countries fully restored their bilateral relationships. In place of the old order came the humanitarian disaster and civil war in Syria, and the escalating geopolitical confrontation between the United States and the enhanced revisionist forces in the region, Russia and Iran. In each case, the cards in the deck in the geopolitical poker of Eastern Mediterranean moved with great speed in recent weeks and will continue for some time yet. In the middle of it are the hydrocarbon reserves in Cyprus, Israel, Egypt and, prospectively, Lebanon and Greece. The big question in the region still remains Turkey, which has now noted too bad relations with Egypt while asked to solve the internal problems after the failed coup of 15th of July. Ankara, under Recep Tayyip Erdogan, considers that the period that the United States had the upper hand in the region is long gone. That is why they do not hesitate to move unpredictably and to the limits, seeking maximum benefits. The Turkish side sees that there is a risk to stay out of the energy game in the Eastern Mediterranean. This was the cause of the illegal issue of NAVTEX for areas within Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and "Barbaros" mission, which sometimes continues to perform seismic surveys south of Cyprus.

The Energy Identity of Eastern Mediterranean

In this chapter will be present the energy background of the Eastern Mediterranean region, following the recent discoveries, and then the energy identity of the neighboring countries separately. The main aim of this is to reveal all the data in order to show the potential of the region and the importance of the deposits for each country that are off of their maritime borders. Nowadays, we could divide the region of Eastern Mediterranean into four regions-places where there is evidence and tangible results of big quantities of hydrocarbons into the sea. More specific these places are:

- 1) The field of Herodotus, which is located in southeast of Crete, southwest of Cyprus and in Northern coasts of Egypt.
- 2) The field of Levantine, which is extending in the sea area between Cyprus, Israel, Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon and off the strife-torn of Gaza Strip.
- 3) The Cone field off the Nile Delta in Egypt¹.
- 4) The sea area south of Crete².



A map of Eastern Mediterranean gas fields³

The investigations so far in the Eastern Mediterranean revealed the existence of deposits which measure approximately 105.9 tcf of exploitable natural gas. In addition, according to a study guided by the United States Geological Survey (USGS),

¹ Nile Delta Natural-Gas Potential is Significant, By Mark Kirschbaum and Jessica Robertson, July 2010, USGS <http://soundwaves.usgs.gov/2010/07/research.html>

² [http://www.ypeka.gr/Default.aspx?tabid=389&snl\[524\]=3270&language=el-GR](http://www.ypeka.gr/Default.aspx?tabid=389&snl[524]=3270&language=el-GR) Ministerial Decisions for the exploration and exploitation of 20 Greek Hydrocarbons marine areas (blocks) in the Ionian and southern Crete

³ "Politics, economics still stifle Eastern Mediterranean gas", DR CAROLE NAKHLE, 10 MARCH 2016, <http://www.crystolenergy.com/politics-economics-still-stifle-eastern-mediterranean-gas/>

which was produced in 2010, both in the area off the Nile Delta and Levantine field, and in the wider sea area around Cyprus, there is a serious possibility of the existence of deposits in a total amount that may reach at most the 335 tcf and 45.9 tcf gas respectively. Also, according to the U.S. Geological Survey an estimated mean of 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and a mean of 122 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas are in the Levant Basin Province⁴. In order to advance the processes in all the countries involved, the necessary arrangements should be made for the delimitation of the EEZ in marine areas as few of them have cleared the way in this field. The delimitation of maritime zones in the eastern Mediterranean in the area between Greece and Egypt-Cyprus and Turkey, it is obvious that there is not only a simple technical matter, but mainly has political characteristics. In the same area there are also neighboring states as Libya, Syria, Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon. One of the main causes of non EEZ boundary is due to the non-signing of the terms of the Law of the Sea Convention of 1982 from the Turkish side⁵. Also, Turkey does not accept the rules of international maritime law, in particular with the delimitation of the continental shelf selectively to the Aegean region due to the existence of the islands of Castelorizo and Strogili in the area. On the other hand, two crucial issues on the demarcation of the EEZ's of the Eastern Mediterranean is enclosed firstly in the proclamation and the limits of the Palestinian state due to its dispute with Israel and secondly to the future status of Syria and Libya in which the situation is horrific nowadays. The last few years developed in the south-eastern Mediterranean region an effort EEZ demarcation between Cyprus and Lebanon and last Cyprus and Israel. Turkey's reaction was immediate and largely threatening especially for Cyprus. This is because, pending the resolution of the Cyprus issue, Turkey refuses any setting in the area which would theoretically harm its national interests⁶. The potential for exploitation is quite long and in this direction will move all states in the region to benefit from them. Indeed, for some of them these may prove lifesaving due to its fiscal problems. Moving forward our presentation of the energy identity of Eastern Mediterranean let present now the energy background of every country separately.

GREECE

According to the Energy Information Agency, the US Energy Department, Greece does not yet have reliable data regarding the proven or estimated gas reserves in its geographical territory. Except of the deposits of Prinos and of South Kavala in Northern Greece with total production of 850 million cubic meters of gas, or 85% of the originally calculated reserves⁷, the country was not famous for their deposits. But, in Southern Crete (Herodotus), in the southeast of Crete between the Greek (when

⁴ "Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources of the Levant Basin Province, Eastern Mediterranean" Fact Sheet 2010-3014, World Petroleum Resources Project
<https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/fs20103014>

⁵ "Greece, Turkey and the Aegean Sea: A Case Study in International Law", Haralambos Athanasopoulos, McFarland, 2001, p.50-70

⁶ "Η παγίδα των ΑΟΖ-Γιατί το «κλειδί» είναι η υφαλοκρηπίδα", Γρηγόρης Ι. Τσάλτας, 13/04/2012, Foreign Affairs-The Hellenic Edition

⁷ Η εμπειρία από την αξιοποίηση κοιτασμάτων Πρίνου & Νότιας Καβάλας, Κώστας Μ. Παπακωνσταντίνου, Μηχ/κός Πετρελαίων, Δ/νων Σύμβουλος Kavala Oil

declared) and Cypriot EEZ the last few years there are indications that they could exist hydrocarbon fields⁸. Greece is using natural gas in order to meet its domestic needs. For 2013, the total energy consumption was 1.151 btu while the production was at 0.413 btu⁹. Those numbers leads Greece to import large portions of natural gas either via pipelines either in LNG form by the terminal of de-liquefaction at Revithoussa. Major suppliers of natural gas for Greece are Russia (via pipelines which arriving in the country through Bulgaria), Algeria (LNG) and Turkey¹⁰. Later, Greece will become receptor and forwarding of Azerbaijani gas to Europe through the construction of the TAP pipeline (ITGI pipeline).

We have to state that the unprecedented and ongoing fiscal crisis in Greece along with the recent hydrocarbons discoveries in the region made the governments of the country to move at a rapid pace in a first "serious" active efforts by participating in these discoveries. Greece, has shown an intense interest over the construction of pipelines through its territory and nowadays is participating in the construction of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP which will transfer gas from Azerbaijan and Turkey and is the continuation of the TANAP-Trans-Anatolian Pipeline) through Greece, Albania and the Adriatic Sea to Italy (and secondly to the European markets). This pipeline ranks Greece on one of the most important European partners in the transit of Azeri gas by taking part in the Southern Gas Corridor which is so vital for the European Union¹¹. Additionally, into this framework a landmark for the energy policy of Greece is the participation in the trilateral agreements firstly with the participation of Cyprus and Israel and secondly with Cyprus and Egypt. In the first "alliance" the three countries have agreed to restart the gas pipeline project called EastMed, which will connect directly to the East Mediterranean gas fields with European networks of gas system, promoted strategic trilateral energy projects such as the "EuroAsia Interconnector" which provides the cable connection of the three countries, for power transfer in the energy markets of continental Europe, explored the possibilities of construction of transfer stations of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in Greece and also contains cooperation in the areas of tourism, culture, water management, desalination technology and the protection of the marine environment¹². Alongside, the second "alliance" that formed in the region is between Greece, Egypt and Israel. According to the Athens Declaration of the Trilateral Summit the three leaders discussed about energy networks, the discovery of the Zhor deposit in Egypt, the further development of the Cypriot deposits, and to promote energy pipeline through Greece. Also, agreed

⁸ "The importance of Eastern Mediterranean gas fields for Greece and the EU", Alain Bruneton, Elias Konofagos, Anthony E. Foscolos, January 2012, Pytheas Market Focus

⁹ According to the statistics of U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) for Greece <http://205.254.135.7/beta/international/country.cfm?iso=GRC>

¹⁰ ENERGY SUPPLY SECURITY 2014, Emergency response systems of individual IEA countries, Greece,

https://www.iea.org/media/freepublications/security/EnergySupplySecurity2014_Greece.pdf

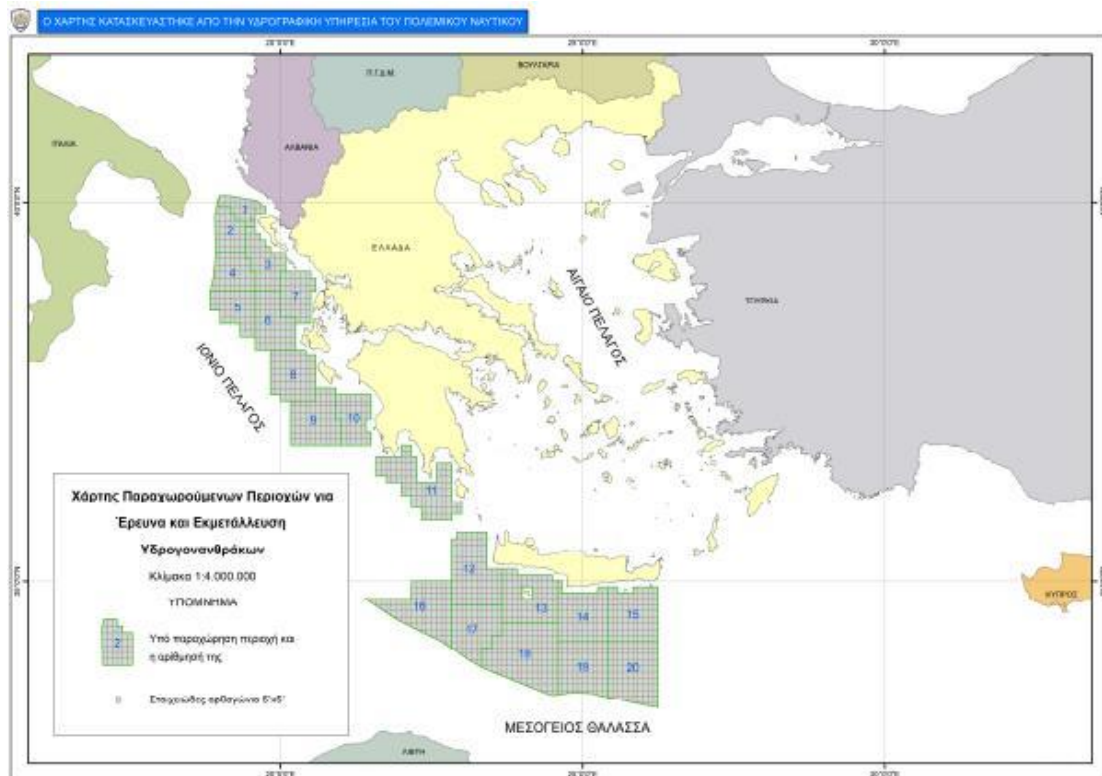
See also the "REPORT ON THE SECURITY OF NATURAL GAS SUPPLY IN GREECE" by the Greek Regulatory authority for Energy.

¹¹ "The Southern Gas Corridor: Europe's Lifeline?" by David Koranyi, IAI working papers, April 2014

¹² "Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance", Zenonas Tziarras, Jan 2016, Taylor & Francis Group

the acceleration on the consultations on the delimitation of maritime zones under international law¹³.

These two agreements and the pipeline's plans give a hope for Greece in order to be a key part not only in the exploitation procedure but also in the field of being a safe transit route of these deposits through the Mediterranean region which the last five years is passing a years of turmoil. In order to have benefits the strategic alliances, the support of the big organizations and countries against any interference would be crucial for the realization of these projects.



Map of concession areas for exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in the Greek territory¹⁴

CYPRUS

Until 2010, when it became widely known the results of surveys of Cyprus, regarding the discovery of natural gas reserves, the proven reserves, the country's production, and the country's consumption of natural gas was not too big. Cyprus is based primarily on oil consumption, and electricity to meet its domestic needs. The recent discoveries in the region are changing the status of the country. The proven deposits

¹³ "Greece-Egypt-Cyprus Trilateral Summit - Athens Declaration", Wednesday, 09 December 2015, <http://www.mfa.gr/en/current-affairs/statements-speeches/athens-declaration-greece-egypt-cyprus-trilateral-summit.html>

¹⁴ Hydrographic Service of Hellenic Navy

extend from the Levantine field up to the limits of the scope of Herodotus region. Cyprus has separated in 12 Marine Land, where research should be performed in collaboration with foreign companies. Nowadays, investigations are conducted in the Block 12 or "Aphrodite" as commonly called. This deposit is estimated to contain approximately 5-8 tcf of natural gas, with a total value estimated at between 30 and 100 billion dollars. According to the Director of the Energy Service of the Cyprus Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Solon Kasinis, the deposit of Aphrodite contains about 8-12 tcf of gas. Indeed, the value of size is estimated around EUR 350 billion and the net profit from the exploitation from 30 billion to 100 billion euro. The exploration of the deposit is being entered by Noble Energy in cooperation with the Israeli interests company Delek Group. Aphrodite it is possible to support a production of about 10 billion cubic meters (bcm) a year for the next 20-30 years in which the majority of the deposit would be exported as the needs of Cyprus is not of this big size. At the same time, the Cypriot Government is aiming at exploiting the other eleven plots which is around the island¹⁵. It's a fact that the Cypriot government has proceeded with the invitation to tender for attracting stakeholders for investigation off of its southern coasts and a respectful number of companies showed their interest.

Worth mentioning is the participation of the tripartite with Greece and Egypt and Greece-Israel as they are a strong counterbalance against the objections of Turkey over the Cypriot position about the EEZ. Estimates over the deposits, the participation in the above-mentioned alliances and the plans for Cyprus to become both an Energy Hub as much a transit country with pipelines makes it not only a strong player in the region but also the right management of the deposits would made overcome the difficult economic situation of the previous years. The mining and exploitation process will not be easy for Cyprus itself as in this equation includes Turkey and the resolution of the Cyprus issue. Turkey claims that the Cypriot government has no right to conclude international agreements before solving the Cyprus problem. At the same time it appears as guarantor of the Turkish Cypriot community rights over Cyprus (eg profits from the plot 12), while is the only country that recognize and invokes the TRNC. Indeed, into this framework, Turkey has already reached an agreement with the TRNC for the demarcation of their economic zones illegally since 2011¹⁶.

LEBANON

Lebanon based heavily on energy imports in order to cover its domestic needs (the Arab Gas Pipeline is delivering volumes of Egyptian natural gas). Until recently the country was inactive even in oil production or in the gas sector. This policy changed rapidly when recently, in the maritime borders of Israel and Cyprus discovered a new deposit gas field of 707 billion cubic meters which causes Lebanon to launch a competition over the exploitation of the deposit. Two companies named Cairn Energy

¹⁵ "APHRODITE'S GIFT: CAN CYPRIOT GAS POWER A NEW DIALOGUE?", Europe Report N°216 - 2 April 2012

¹⁶ "Fishing for Gas and More in Cypriot Waters", Michael Emerson, 2013, Insight Turkey Volume 15 No 1

and GeoSpectrum seems to show interest on the deposit which was discovered a few years ago¹⁷. The exploitation of the deposits in this area will depend on the attitude that will keep both Israel and Lebanon as there are strong disagreements about the EEZ while we should not forget the war that broke out between them in the summer of 2006.

ISRAEL

Israel had domestic reserves of around 1.5 -1.7 tcf of natural gas as well as described above and was among the first countries that entered into a process of research and mining. These stocks are derived mainly from the largest and most well known deposits of the country such as Mari-B, Noa, Tanin, Leviathan, Yam Tethys, Dalit, Karish etc. Israel covers its needs by importing its natural gas mainly from Egypt through the Arish-Askelon pipeline, which is a branch of the great Arab Gas Pipeline Pipeline (in which Cairo also supply natural gas in addition to Israel, Lebanon, Syria, but and Jordan). The Arish - Askelon carries this time a year in Israel an amount of about 72 bcf of natural gas, while the total of the maximum capacity can be up to 260 bcf. The first agreements stated that Egypt would supply Israel with 1.7 billion cubic meters, or 60 billion cubic feet of natural gas each year. This amount was later increased to 2.1 billion cubic meters, or 74 billion cubic feet per year¹⁸.

The areas where proven reserves with significant amounts of natural gas have been discovered are part of the Field of Levantine. Noble Energy investigations have revealed the gigantic deposit of Leviathan which the eastern part of it borders with Cyprus Aphrodite, and estimated to have about 16 gas tcf, and also the Tamar deposits and Dalit. The second is located west of Leviathan and nowadays is estimated to provide a quantity of gas which at best could even reach 8.4 tcf. Lastly, worthy of mention is the discovery of the deposit Dalit, located southwest of the Tamar and is estimated to have about 15 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas¹⁹.

The options for Israel in order to introduce its gas deposits are quite a lot. Firstly, with the construction of the East Med pipeline which will run from Cyprus and Israel's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), in Crete, and from there to mainland Greece and then in Europe. The second option for Israel is to process the choice of Turkey, which is trying to become an energy hub for the entire region. The progress of relations

¹⁷ "Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Implications for Regional Maritime Security", Sarah Vogler and Eric V. Thompson, Eastern Mediterranean Energy Project March 2015, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)

¹⁸ "Egypt's Revocation of the Natural Gas Agreement with Israel: Strategic Implications", May 6, 2012 Shmuel Even

See also "EGYPT, ISRAEL, AND THE ARISH-ASHKELON PIPELINE CONTROVERSY", By Jodi Sanger-Weaver, Journal of International Affairs at the University of California, San Diego, <https://prospectjournal.org/2012/01/24/egypt-israel-and-the-arish-ashkelon-pipeline-controversy/>

¹⁹ "The importance of Eastern Mediterranean gas fields for Greece and the EU", Bruneton Alain, Konofagos Elias, Foscolos Anthony

between the two countries is expected with interest after the restoration of relations in June 2016 and the incident with the Mavi Marmara in May 2010²⁰. The activation of bilateral relations will be of interest not only in the energy sector but also in other economic sectors. Lastly, Israel could export its reservoirs to the Kingdom of Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority²¹. In order to achieve its goals, the Israeli energy policy, the cultivation of a climate of good neighborliness and mutual trust is required both between partners and of competitors in the area.

PALESTINE-GAZA STRIP

Palestine both in West Bank and the Gaza Strip is depending on Israeli and Egyptian supply. According to the EIA, in the Palestinian territory there are gas reserves but the uncertainty in the relationships with Israel and Egypt they may cannot let Palestine exploit its reserves. For example, they have confirmed the existence of the deposit of Mari-B, which appears to contain around 1 tcf of gas and it's located in the region between the Israeli and the possible Palestinian EEZ²². Also, in 2000 took place the discovery of the Gaza Marine field which holds an estimated of 1.6 trillion cubic feet in recoverable natural gas resources and according to BG Group which drilled two wells the reserves are estimated to 1.4 trillion cubic feet, valued at approximately 4 billion dollars²³. It's a fact that Palestine is located in a sensitive chord on the map. Issues in the exploitation of natural gas deposits in the region may be the making of EEZ by the Palestinian Authority off the coasts of Gaza Strip between the Israel's EEZ mainly where there is always an underlying tension (the latest hostilities took place in the summer of 2014) and in Egypt where are also estimated sufficient gas reserves. It's obvious that the Palestine in the future will have access and therefore entitled to the exploitation of hydrocarbons that extend around the Gaza Strip. In this case, all sides will have to show mutual understanding and to respect the rules of international law.

EGYPT

Egypt is the largest oil producer in Africa outside of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the second-largest natural gas producer on the continent, behind Algeria. Despite the political turmoil that Egypt experienced in recent years (from 2011 and onwards) with the overthrow of both the regimes of Hosni Mubarak and Mohammed Morsi (the first free elected government), Egypt is the only country in the region, which currently has valuable, proven and fully exploitable gas fields (for example Zohr²⁴), as well as a structured field exploitation,

²⁰ "Israel and Turkey agree to restore full diplomatic relations", John Reed in Jerusalem and Laura Pitel in Istanbul, June 27, 2016, Financial Times , <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a4ad3370-3c63-11e6-9f2c-36b487ebd80a.html#axzz4HDewqta9>

²¹ "NATURAL GAS EXPORT OPTIONS FOR ISRAEL AND CYPRUS", Simon Henderson, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, September 2013

²² EIA's data over Palestine <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=PSE>

²³ "Gaza Marine: Natural Gas Extraction in Tumultuous Times?" Tim Boersma and Natan Sachs, Brookings Institution, February 2015

²⁴ "Vast Reserves of Natural Gas Found Off the Coast of Egypt", The New York Times, AUG. 30, 2015,

production and export natural gas to third countries. More specific, Egypt in total has around 63 tcf of natural gas reserves (according to data at the end of 2013) and in recent years, is reaching an 2.2 class annual gas production tcf which helps them to export large quantities both in neighboring and EU countries²⁵. Much of the existing production is used to meet the internal needs of the country while the rest mainly go to export. According to the assessment of the United States Geological Survey, the Conical Field in the Nile Delta may be present total quantities of gas arriving through the 106 tcf²⁶. The export gas is directed to third countries at either via pipeline or in the form of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to EU countries and the US. In the sector of the pipelines Egypt has an advantage as it has under its management the SUMED (Suez-Mediterranean) and the Arab Gas Pipeline. Through the operation of the Suez Canal and the SUMED Pipeline, Egypt plays a vital role in international energy markets. The SUMED is an oil pipeline which is running from the Ain Sukhna terminal on the Gulf of Suez to offshore Sidi Kerir, in Alexandria which means that is the only route to directly transport crude oil from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The second and equally important pipeline is the Arab Gas Pipeline, which transports natural gas to Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Israel covering both its own domestic needs and the above mentioned countries. What remains to be seen now is how Egypt through the proper movement and alliances that itself will configure will be able to acquire benefits from the best possible exploitation of the deposits in order to be able to rebound from the difficult fiscal situation that caused the events of the Arab Spring.

SYRIA

The case of Syria is a special case as the prolonged instability since the early 2011 has led the country in civil war and in a continuous fighting between the Syrian regimes of Assad forces against the fighters of the Islamic State. It is no exaggeration to say that the country has been split in two and more pieces and the conflict has taken sectarian features and regional countries have been mixed in the conflict. Regional countries like Iran and Lebanon are fighting in favor of the Assad forces while Saudi Arabia and Qatar are supporting the opposition. Syria in previous years considered as one of the most powerful forces in the field of mineral resources but after the start of the warring situation the profile of the country changed dramatically in all the sectors of the economy. According to, the Oil and Gas Journal for 2013, Syria's proved oil reserves estimated at 2.5 billion bbl²⁷. In the energy sector things could not remain unaffected by the current situation as well as several of the country's infrastructures (like oil and gas pipelines) have been so damaged both by the fighting and by the air

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/31/business/energy-environment/vast-reserves-of-natural-gas-found-off-the-coast-of-egypt.html?_r=0

²⁵ http://www.theoilandgasyear.com/content/uploads/2015/03/TOGY_Egypt_2015_Preview.pdf

²⁶ "The importance of Eastern Mediterranean gas fields for Greece and the EU", January 2012, Pytheas Market Focus, Alain Bruneton, Elias Konofagos, Anthony E. Foscolos

²⁷ "EIA: Syria's oil production unlikely to recover for months, maybe years", Paula Dittrick, February 2014, Oil and Gas Journal, <http://www.ogi.com/articles/2014/02/eia-syria-s-oil-production-unlikely-to-recover-for-months-maybe-years.html>

strikes. The aim of the Syrian government through the years, due to its position on the map, was to become a transit country for energy resources in principle, Egypt, Iraq, Iran and Azerbaijan, which means increased transit revenues, which would contribute to increasing the availability of natural gas in the country.

Nowadays, and since 2011 Syria is unavailable to export its oil deposits, a fact that is affecting the government's revenue so much. Production and exports of crude oil have fallen to nearly zero, and the country is facing supply shortages of refined products. Syria's oil production, which averaged over 400,000 b/d between 2008 and 2010, was less than 25,000 b/d in May 2015²⁸. Indeed, many of the oil fields have fallen into the hands of jihadists who observed that illegally sell oil reaping huge benefits. Before the start of the civil war in 2010, Syria produced 316 billion cubic feet (Bcf) of dry natural gas. During the conflict and mainly in 2013 according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) the production falls to 187 Bcf. This numbers is showing that Syria is still looking for importing some energy sources. It seems that these needs are covering with the use of the Arab Gas Pipeline. Regarding the deposits off to its coasts, Syria is monitoring the developments but the warring situation does not facilitate any move in the chessboard. As regional countries are participating in this conflict the worse will be for Syria in order to implement with a safe way in the mining process. The liquidity and uncertainty about the future of the country-even and then of any definitive solution causes serious concerns about future movements in Syria, both in political and in the energy landscape of the region.

TURKEY

Turkey is positioned in the most strategic position on the map as the western borders are reaching Europe while the Eastern and South-Eastern are bordering with countries of Central Asia and Middle East respectively. That fact makes Ankara an important player as a transit hub for oil and natural gas supplies. Total proven reserves of Turkey's natural gas, according to data of 2015, seem to stand at 218 bcf, with total production of the country for 2013 be increased to 19 bcf, intended solely to cover its domestic needs. This production comes from the Black Sea deposits, the largest of them being the Marmara Kuzey which is located in the Sea of Marmara. The Turkish domestic production they don't cover the energy needs of the country's natural gas needs. Thus, Turkey turned on imports, mainly from Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran. Alongside, the main gas supplier of Turkey is Russia in which the Russian gas reaches the Turkish territory through their pipeline's network either from the Balkans (Romania - Bulgaria - Turkey Pipeline) either from the Caspian Sea (Blue Stream pipeline). In addition, the Baku - Tbilisi - Erzurum pipeline is connecting Turkey with Azerbaijan giant deposit, Shah Deniz, in the Caspian Sea while simultaneously the Iran - Turkey pipeline, is introducing about 49 bcf of Iranian gas. Finally, Turkey, has also expressed an interest in participating in the project of the ITGI pipeline which will connect Turkey-Greece and Italy (Interconnector-TGI) and more recently to

²⁸ <http://205.254.135.7/beta/international/regions-topics.cfm?RegionTopicID=EM>

support the construction proposals of Trans Anatolian Gas Pipeline and South - East European Pipeline, which are geared to carry Azeri gas to the European market²⁹.

In that regard, things over the natural gas discoveries in the A. Mediterranean are quite complicated and this is coming from not only from the demands that Turkey is always putting on the table but also from the status quo that they've formed in the region of the Eastern Mediterranean. The bilateral relationships with Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Egypt, with the countries of the Middle East and the delimitation of the EEZ are raising various concerns over the negotiations and the safe exploitation procedure. Indeed, Ankara entered the "game" of E. Mediterranean dynamically by contesting, even with the threat of force, the right of Cyprus to proceed unilaterally in the exploitation of its plots. Outbreaks of this Turkish policy are the threats over the Greek EEZ (EEZ of Kastelorizo) and expansion of the Greek nautical miles to 12 miles and illegal investigative procedures in recent years by Turkish research vessels in the territories of Greece and Cyprus. Additionally, the Turkish side does not see with good eye the alliances that have been formed in the region which making them a simple observer of the developments. The instability and the uncertainty in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East, the negotiations between all the parties and the attitude of Turkey itself will play a crucial role over the general situation in the area with the cooperation and the mutual understanding to be the key points between all the countries.

Recent developments in Eastern Mediterranean

The last 20 years, have gone rapidly the investigations into the discovery of new oil, gas and hydrocarbons deposits worldwide. For Europe except the big reservoirs of the Arctic, the Eastern Mediterranean, over the last fifteen years knows a boom in discovering energy resources and reserves. Those developments, they have forced EU to observe and intervene in what is happening in the region as two of its member-states, Greece and Cyprus, are actively involved in the operation while also constitutes a new alternative choice against the monopoly of the Russian gas as the relationships with the latter is not in a good shape after the illegal annexation of the Crimea peninsula in 2014. The first inquiries in the region of Eastern Mediterranean made in the late 1940s and more specifically in 1948 when the state of Israel was founded. This was that set out to reduce its energy savings from its neighbor's dependence and draw on its own reserves.³⁰ A few years later in 1967 after strenuous efforts in the Mediterranean region takes place the first major gas discovery, the so-called Abu Madi which is located in the Delta region, the discovery of the Abu Qir in 1969, while in 1971 followed the discovery of the deposit of Abu El Gkaradiq in the Western

²⁹ IEA's data over Turkey <http://205.254.135.7/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=TUR>

³⁰ "Israel's Energy Security Implications", Gawdat Bahgat, Fall 2011, Volume XVIII, Number 3, Middle East Policy Council
<http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/israels-energy-security-regional-implications>

Desert³¹. These three developments was the main reason of the big expansion of exploration in the region by big oil companies. From that time and then, have begun an intense energy interest in the region both from the regional countries and from major powers such as United States of America and Russia through its oil firms for possible existence deposits. With the dawn of the new millennium everything seems to change in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Cypriot Government, in cooperation with Egypt pursue an agreement in exploitation over potential gas reservoirs within their areas, while in 2003 progressed to joint delimitation of their Exclusives Economic Zones (EEZ)³². Indeed, in 2007 Cyprus went the first exploration and extraction cycle for the eleven plots so as they had described. Also, in the game of the exploitation procedure had entered the American company named “Noble Energy”. The latter was not only the firm that developed the biggest reservoir in the region, the so-called Leviathan which is located off the coasts of Israel and close to Tamar field, which is estimated at 16 trillion cubic meters, but also won the license for the first exploration round in Cyprus plot 12(or Aphrodite)³³.

Relationships of Turkey with the regional countries

Recent developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, with the restoration of Turkish-Israeli relations and the normalization process of the corresponding Russian-Turkish, was the occasion for discussions on the "new" geostrategic environment that is emerging in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The highly complex and volatile Eastern Mediterranean security system has entered a period of increased uncertainty due to the internal political crisis in Turkey. The center of tension, Syria remains in chaos, with escalating conflicts between the Syrian regime's forces and the opposition in Syrian areas and increased potential for new refugee flows to be possible. The Turkish-Kurdish conflict (within and outside Turkey) continues, undermining anyway the small efforts in finding a solution in the Syrian tragedy, while the problems concerning the use of the Incirlik base hampering operations against the so-called Islamic State (ISIS). The strategy uncertainty exacerbated, due to the unpredictability of the next moves of the Turkish President Erdogan, who seems to harden his attitude towards US and EU and invest in the revival of Turkish-Russian relations. At the same time we should not forget the various waves that they have passed at times its relations with Greece and Cyprus (the Cyprus settlement is the thorn in the two countries). The only glimmer of hope seems the rapprochement and normalization of relations with Israel.

³¹ “No EEZ Solution: The Politics of Oil and Gas in the Eastern Mediterranean” , Stocker, James, The Middle East Journal, Volume 66, Number 4, Autumn 2012, pp. 579-597(19), Middle East Institute

³² “Agreement between the Republic of Cyprus and the Arab Republic of Egypt on the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone” 17 February 2003 , <http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/EGY-CYP2003EZ.pdf>

³³ “The oil and gas regime in the Republic of Cyprus”, Geoffrey Picton-Turbervill and Mhairi Main Garcia, Energy Briefing ,March 2012 , Ashurst

Within this framework involved and the energy sector which is directly interested in Turkey. Turkey wants at all costs to have a role in the management of marine natural gas deposits in the eastern Mediterranean to reduce its energy from Russia and Iran dependence and fulfill its ambitions to become an energy hub of East and West. . The Ankara government wants to channel the Cypriot gas to Europe through pipelines that will pass through their territory. It seeks to construct a pipeline Israel - Turkey and a pipeline Israel - Egypt. They want to divert gas to Israel and the Cypriot EEZ to Turkey in the north and Suez to the south for the Asian markets. Ankara pursues a hegemonic and expansionist policy in order to control the energy resources of the Cypriot EEZ. Indeed, in this direction, the mission of Barbaros vessel, which was conducting illegal seismic surveys into the Cypriot EEZ³⁴ was a motion in order to ask pressure on Nicosia's government to accept a bizonal bicomunal solution for Cyprus.

In one way or another, the upcoming months (mainly the period of 2015-2016) are very critical on all fronts which have opened Turkey. The exploitation of its geopolitical position and diversification of sources of energy supply are two big bets. Turkey in order to be able to meet on the one hand their needs and on the other to realize its ambition to become an energy hub of East and West. What now remains to be seen is with which way Turkey will manage the internal political crisis in the basis of developments in neighboring countries in the region. In the pages below will crystallize Turkey's relations with key countries in the region both in bilateral relations with itself and the scope of the alliances that have been formed.

Turkey and Israel

The relations between Turkey and Israel started in 1949 when the Turkish government granted recognition to the newly state of Israel. Until 2009, Turkey had good diplomatic relations with Israel. These relations were interrupted that year, when under the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Turkish president Erdogan attacked verbally to President of Israel Simon Peres for the policy that follows Israel towards the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip³⁵. The bilateral relations even further exacerbated in May of 2010 after the Israeli intervention-attack against the flotilla (ship of Mavi Marmara) who sailed to Gaza and caused the death of nine Turkish citizens. After the incident with the Mavi Marmara, Turkey had set three conditions in order to restore relations with Israel:

- Israel to seek public apology, which was held in 2013.

³⁴ "Full of Gas, Full of Problems: The Eastern Mediterranean's Hydrocarbon Showdown", Zenonas Tziarras & Gabriel Mitchell, 06/01/2015, Policy Brief, Diplomatic Academy, University of Nicosia and Press Statement Regarding the departure of seismic research vessel Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa, March 30, 2015, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,

³⁵ "Stormy debate in Davos over Gaza", Al Jazeera and agencies, 29 Jan 2009, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2009/01/20091291976879610.html>

- To compensate the families of the victims.
- Israel to lift its naval blockade of the Gaza Strip

The third condition is the more difficult for Israel and is essentially braked the progress. The following period was particularly difficult for Israel relations – Turkey. The first effort for normalizing the bilateral relationship took place on March of 2013 when the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, after an intervention of U.S. President Barack Obama, in order to apologize over the Mavi Marmara incident. But, after 6 years of coldness, the developments in the area of both the Mediterranean and the Middle East have brought closer the two countries. The fight against the fighters of Islamic State, the serious deterioration of Turkey-Russia relations following the downing of the Su-24, last December, the evolutions in Libya, Iraq and Syria and the developments of the energy deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean are some key features in order to make Turkey get away from the deadlock.

The last feature over the gas deposits is one of the main reasons for Turkey to be more active because observes the alliances and the close ties of its regional countries with suspicion and its participation in the exploitation and the transfer of gas with good eye. It's real that the agreement between Cyprus and Israel over the delimitation of the EEZ and the prospect of cooperation not particularly thanked Turkey³⁶. Israel having in possession of these stocks is formulating the choices regarding the disposal of these stocks and the cooperation scope opened up by the new situation in bilateral relations with Turkey as they appeared in the previous month. For example, for both countries the construction of a pipeline which will connect Turkey and Israel wouldn't be also a sign of building confidence and as a step towards normalization of relations between the two countries but also for Turkey would be a clear way in order to counterbalance the alliance of Israel and Cyprus and export the gas deposits from the Mediterranean to the European market³⁷. The project of this pipeline is so crucial for both economic and political reasons according to the former American ambassador in Azerbaijan, Mr. Matthew J. Bryza. In the economic field, the construction of this pipeline would be more profitable than the proposal of Cyprus which is to create an LNG plant in the Cypriot territory, specifically in Vasilikos, and then with special ships to transfer the reservoirs in the interesting markets. According to some researches the cost of making the LNG plant is more expensive than the pipeline as the estimated cost is reaching the amount of 10 billion euro³⁸. Additionally, in the terms of economic the Leviathan gas reservoir would lead Turkey to avoid the strong dependence on Russian and Iranian gas. Especially the first is the main monopoly on Europe. The advantages for Turkey would be many as the Turkish side will assure for

³⁶ Cyprus and Israel Sign Deal Demarcating Sea Borders, Dec 17, 2010
read more: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/cyprus-and-israel-sign-deal-demarcating-sea-borders-1.331160>

³⁷ "The prospect of Leviathan field gas is prompting Turkey to normalize Israel ties", February 2014, <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-turkey-wants-leviathan-gas-report-1000916239>

³⁸ "LNG Plant Development at Cyprus", Constantinos Christodoulou

its citizens a lower price and a chance to re-negotiate the terms of agreement with the Russian company (Gazprom) over the price of gas. In this framework, the possibility given to Turkey is great if taken into account that the gas could otherwise be priced³⁹. On the other hand in the political scale, the pipeline would make Turkey the most vital partner for the natural gas supply of Europe. Also, with that way both EU and Turkey would overcome the obstacle of the supply of the Russian natural gas as both of them they don't have good relationships after a series of incidents over the past years⁴⁰.

The proposed plan for the pipeline is to start from the Leviathan gas reservoir and reach the Ceyhan port in the southern coasts of Turkey⁴¹. The route which is expected to follow the pipeline raises many concerns and suspicion in the regional countries such as Lebanon, Syria and Cyprus. Of course, from theory to practice, enough things could change as the factors in the region are many except of the abovementioned countries. More specific, the pipeline would have to cross from the EEZ of Cyprus, a fact that would stir up a storm of reactions from the Cypriot side not only by making impossible the project of the pipeline but would put at risk the viability of trilateral cooperation with Greece⁴². From this game we can't forget the role of the oil firms that they are interested in exploiting the gas reserves and are operating nowadays in the region. Moreover, there is another alternative for the pipeline's construction. Except the Cyprus's solution, the pipeline could pass from the continental shelves of Syria and Lebanon. Up to this, the construction seems unlikely for Turkey if we take into account the bad relationships with both Syria and Lebanon. In the Syrian civil war Turkey followed an ambivalent tactic as in the initial phase of the conflict Turkey was supporting the Islamic State. But, after a series of events that occurred in 2015, Turkey changed stance against the Islamic State as they actively entering against it. Indeed, after months of negotiations, an agreement was reached on the use of Incirlik air base by the Americans for bombing against ISIS, on the Syrian territory, while simultaneously through the agreement Ankara have the chance to create a no-fly zone along the border with Syria in order to shield the border against the constant intrusion risk of Islamists terrorists in its territory⁴³. Additionally, with the Lebanese organization of Hezbollah there are enough tensions in the aftermath of the war between them in the summer of 2006. Having all these features on the table of discussions would seem unsafe the construction and operation of the pipeline under these circumstances.

³⁹ "EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN NATURAL GAS: POTENTIAL FOR HISTORIC BREAKTHROUGHS AMONG ISRAEL, TURKEY, AND CYPRUS", Matthew J. Bryza, Turkish Policy Quarterly, Fall 2013

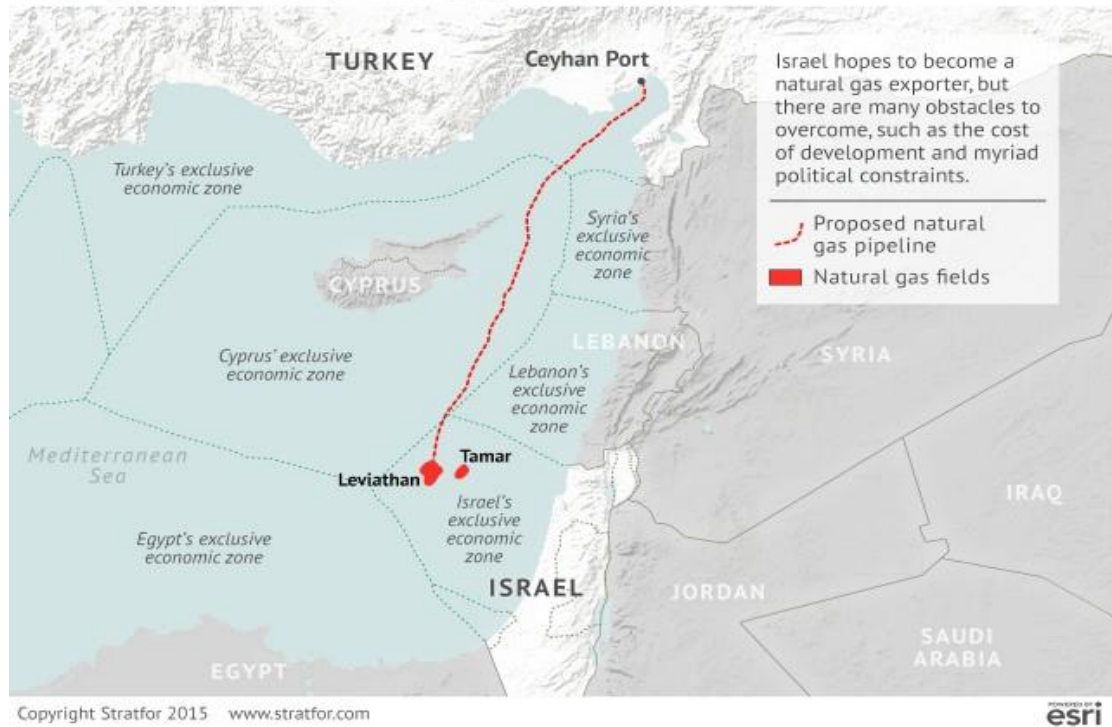
⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Stratfor, 2015

⁴² "Israel-Turkey Pipeline Can Fix Eastern Mediterranean" , Matthew J. Bryza, January 2014, International Centre for Defense and Security, <http://www.icds.ee/publications/article/israel-turkey-pipeline-can-fix-eastern-mediterranean/>

⁴³ "The Paradigm Shift in Turkey's Syria Strategy", Haythem Basson, August 8, 2015, Centre for Geopolitics & Security in Realism Studies

PROPOSED ISRAEL-TURKEY SUBSEA PIPELINE



*The proposed Israel-Turkey subsea Pipeline*⁴⁴

From this equation, of course, Russia will not be absent as it plays a key role in the energy sector. It is obvious that Russia will resist strongly to the construction of this pipeline as she will lose the advantage of gas distribution in the energy markets of Turkey and Europe.

Regardless of any developments in the diplomatic field companies from both sides have begun to send their own signs for further cooperation in the field of energy and particularly of those deposits not only by sending the reservoirs to Turkey but in other regional countries like Jordan, Egypt and Palestinian Authority⁴⁵. The Israeli firm Delek and the Turkish firms Zorlu Energy and Turcas Petrol were in talks and in favor of exporting gas to Europe through the pipeline to Turkey⁴⁶. Indeed, Turcas Petrol announced that it was in favor of building a 470km subsea pipeline from Leviathan to a Turkish port of Cekisan or Mersin⁴⁷.

To sum up, this constant flare of activity which exists in the region, mainly from the companies, should be seen as a bell to the governments of both countries to leave behind any disagreements by progressing in the realization of this project which is

⁴⁴ Stratfor, 2015

⁴⁵ "Can Gas Catalyse Peace in the Eastern Mediterranean?", Ayla Gürel & Laura Le Cornu, *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, Volume 49, Issue 2, 2014

⁴⁶ "Israeli gas group in talks on pipelines to Turkey, Jordan, Egypt", Reuters, August 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/delek-natgas-exports-idUSL6N0G72F920130806>

⁴⁷ "Turkish co proposes Leviathan pipeline", *Globes*, September 2013, <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-1000879065>

expected to be profitable for all parties. To this end it is the recent developments in the diplomatic field between the two countries. With the help of US, Israel and Turkey, reached an agreement to normalize their relations six years after the bloody Israeli commando raid on a Turkish ship "Mavi Marmara". Israel pledged to pay \$ 20 million to a compensation fund for the families of the ten Turks killed in May of 2010 in raid on "Mavi Marmara" off the coasts of Gaza Strip. The agreement provides also compensation for the injured Turks and Ankara will not take legal action against the Israeli military. The normalization of the relations between Turkey - Israel comes at a time of broader upheaval in the Middle East with the apparent defeat of the jihadists of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, the strengthen Kurdish demand for autonomy and energy issues of the region now coming to the forefront. Indeed, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the normalization of relations with Turkey will have "huge" impact on Israel's economy. What is remaining to be seen is which would be the reactions of both sides in the future crisis and challenges in the region⁴⁸.

Turkey and Cyprus

The next challenge and an open front that Turkey has in its southern borders is the relations with Cyprus and the relations of the latter with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as well the issues and the arguments raised by both sides are enough. Cyprus is situated in the Eastern Mediterranean region and its maritime boundaries are bordering with the EEZs of Greece, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt, something that makes it one of the most important factors in the region after the developments as it has progressed into various kinds of agreements the previous years. Since 1960, when Cyprus became an independent country and a member of the United Nations until the summer of 1974 when took place the Turkish invasion those years are years of a fully tension as many countries interfere in the Cypriot political scene. The Republic of Cyprus holds 56% of the territory of the island, the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) the 37%, British the 2.8% (two British Bases) and the United Nations the so-called "Green Line" of about 4%. All the countries condemned the invasion, except of Turkey, which described it as a "peaceful intervention". Indeed, in 1983 the TRNC was proclaimed and recognized only by the Turkish Republic but the United Nations Security Council declared it as invalid⁴⁹. With those elements, it's obvious that there are serious issues to be solved in order to culminate an environment of common understanding and respect between all the actors of the region.

⁴⁸ "Israel, Turkey strike deal to normalize ties", CNN, Oren Liebermann and Elise Labott, June 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/06/26/middleeast/israel-turkey-relations/> and "Netanyahu: Israel-Turkey deal immense boost to economy", Al Jazeera and agencies, June 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/israel-netanyahu-turkey-deal-immense-boost-economy-160627070929351.html>

⁴⁹ "Maritime Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea", Tullio Scovazzi, June 2012, POLICY BRIEF, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)

It's profound that the large offshore gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean have increased the interest of Cyprus in exploiting the reservoirs with the best way for itself as they will have an impact on the economic, energy and geopolitical future. The challenges and the obstacles related to the regions and the country's status quo are ahead.



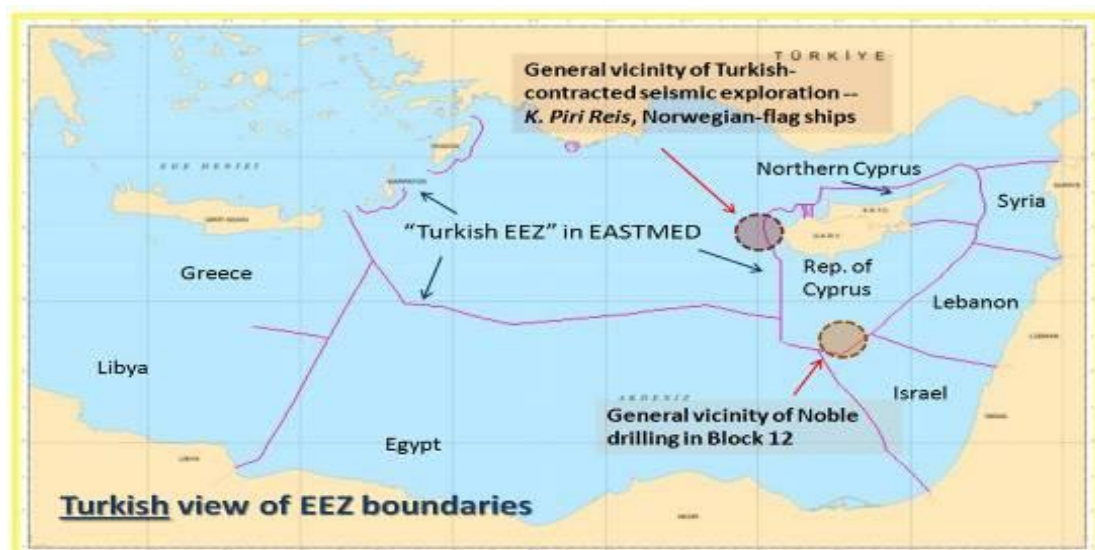
*Cyprus position over the EEZ of the region*⁵⁰

Nowadays, Cyprus and its economy are in a consolidation phase after the turbulence caused by the financial crisis in 2013 and forced the country to resort to the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). The discovery of the deposits in 2011, mainly in plot 12 (or Aphrodite), and the explosion at the naval base of the National Guard of Cyprus “Evangelos Florakis” where were killed 13 people and injured 62, forced Cyprus to change its energy policy which in the future will largely affect both the economic and foreign policy of the country⁵¹. Cyprus has discovered so far an estimated of 3 to 5 tcm, as mentioned above, as the exploration procedure is continuing unstoppable and the reservoirs there is a strong chance to be increased in the near future. We should not forget that the geopolitical instability of the region may make the extraction process complicated and the deliver benefits to the Cypriot side respectively. Turkey has not progressed so far to the delimitation of their EEZ with the surrounding Mediterranean countries as they had turned their interest in the Black Sea. Simultaneously, it is observing leeringly the Cypriot agreements related to the EEZ with Lebanon, Cyprus and Egypt and it's expressing their discontent and sometimes is

⁵⁰ Republic of Cyprus

⁵¹ “Energy Resources and Markets in the Eastern Mediterranean Region”, Brenda Shaffer, June 11, 2012, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)

reacting aggressively⁵². It's a fact that in September of 2011, after the drilling procedure started by the U.S. Company Noble Energy from the Cypriot side in the block 12(also in the Israeli EEZ), Turkey threatened that it would send naval vessels into the drilling area. Also, in November of 2011 Turkey, agreed with Shell for making surveys off the coast of Antalya but until recently the gas finds they haven't been found yet⁵³. In addition, in April of 2012 the Turkish government gave the permission to the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPAO) to begin explorations for gas in six sea areas into the Cypriot EEZ⁵⁴. A month later, Cyprus started the procedure for tendering the exploration rights into their EEZ a fact that made Turkey to react strongly by blaming the participating companies. Another two incidents took place in 2014, firstly when the Turkish navy blocked a Norwegian vessel to continue its research for hydrocarbons inside the Cyprus's EEZ and secondly when Turkey sent two warships to conduct seismic surveys inside the Cypriot EEZ again⁵⁵



Turkish position over the EEZ⁵⁶

This whole tension arises because in the area they didn't have agreed both the status quo of the island and the EEZ between the two countries which is quite complicated considering the objections of the two parties. Cyprus as a recognized member of the UN since 1960 is recognized as an international state. On the other hand, the Republic of Northern Cyprus is recognized only by Turkey but it isn't internationally recognized by any other state. Indeed, on September 21, 2011, Turkey and TRNC staged a unilateral agreement defining the EEZ between them. Worth mentioning is the fact that the Cypriot EEZ is recognized by the UN, the EU, the US, Russia, Israel,

⁵² "Turkey's provocative actions in the Eastern Mediterranean & in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone", Georgia Logothetis, ISSUE BRIEF, The Hellenic American Leadership Council, December 15, 2014

⁵³ "TURKEY AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN HYDROCARBONS", Ayla Gürel & Laura Le Cornu, Global Political Trends Center Publications, October 2013

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ "Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Implications for Regional Maritime Security", POLICY BRIEF, Sarah Vogler and Eric V. Thompson, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), March 5, 2015

⁵⁶ Turkish Marine Research Foundation

Egypt, Greece and Lebanon. Simultaneously, Turkey has moved to challenge not only the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea but also the Republic of Cyprus despite the obligation from the EU to implement it under the European customs agreements⁵⁷. Given all of the above, Turkey has made reference several times on the legality of both the EEZ and the mining process as it considers that the Greek Cypriots do not represent the totality of the island and are not certified to progress in agreements. In this direction is indeed the position of both the Turkish Cypriot leadership and the Turkish government which emphasize that the profit from any discovery off the coast of Cyprus should be allocated and to the Turkish Cypriot side reaping benefits from the process⁵⁸. On the other hand, the Cyprus Republic stating that no agreement before the solution of the Cyprus issue would be in effect over the common management of the deposits⁵⁹. Indeed, the Greek-Cypriots are aiming, through the exploitation of its deposits, not only to assure the energy autonomy of Cyprus but to become a regional energy hub and strengthen the geostrategic and geopolitical role of Cyprus.⁶⁰

The plans on the table are enough about the future management of deposits in terms of Cyprus and the countries-allies that Cyprus itself something that does not leave Turkey indifferent. More specific, regarding the creation of a large LNG base on the southern coast of Cyprus (Vasilikos) where the gas will be liquefied and through specially shaped ship will be transported to the markets of Europe, Middle East and Africa making it as one of the major players in this field. Indeed, the construction of an LNG modern base in the southern part of Cyprus is one of the objectives of the Cyprus Government. The construction of course will not be easy from both internal and external pressures. In Vassilikos area they are designed to make several interventions will include a natural gas liquefaction terminal, gas installations and petroleum storage terminals for moving plants from Larnaca and storage of strategic reserves of Cyprus, and other developments relating to the energy sector.⁶¹ The creation of this base will make Cyprus a major hub for the Eastern Mediterranean gas making them a key country for the region by placing thus obliterated the regional powers such as Israel, Egypt, Azerbaijan and Turkey. The latter is the only country that has shown through its movements that is interested to become energy center or in the form of pipelines or as liquefied gas terminal in the southern coast of Turkey. In this way Turkey, will try to enter in the game of both the transport and storage and the gas drive from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe displacing from this process

⁵⁷ "NATURAL GAS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: THE COAL AND STEEL OF THE 21ST CENTURY?", Kevin Johnson, Alex Ross, and Endy Zemenides, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, JUNE 22, 2015

⁵⁸ "Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Implications for Regional Maritime Security", POLICY BRIEF, Sarah Vogler and Eric V. Thompson, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), March 5, 2015

⁵⁹ N. Αναστασιάδης: «Πρώτα η λύση του Κυπριακού, μετά η συνδιαχείριση», 30.11.2014, ΛΕΥΤΕΡΗΣ ΑΔΕΙΛΙΝΗΣ, ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ

⁶⁰ "PIVOTING ENERGY RELATIONS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN", Suzanne Carlson, Spring 2016, TURKISH POLICY QUARTERLY

⁶¹ "MASTER PLAN OF THE VASILIKOS AREA (UPDATE) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY", May 2015, REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Cyprus⁶². At the same time, the large Azerbaijan stocks put another big barrier to Cyprus to become the benchmark in the region in terms of storage and transport of natural gas as its pipes penetrate the Turkish territory and is one of the most important gas suppliers of the European Union. Additionally, the construction of the base will be combined with the construction of an underwater pipeline from Israeli EEZ to Vasilikos which according to estimates will be quite costly (about 2.5 billion euros) if we take into account the economic situation of Cyprus in recent years.⁶³ Simultaneously, having in mind the big accident at the base of Charilaos Florakis in July 2011 the Republic of Cyprus should give great emphasis in safety both on land and sea as the Vassilikos area will have great strategic importance. The big game of pipelines which will supply the ever increasing needs of Europe is a serious matter that Cyprus should have at drawing on seeking to play an important role in the region as the Southern Corridor is about to become the most important supplier of gas to EU

Additionally, has examined the creation of a submarine pipeline as described above by the deposit of Leviathan and will end either in Turkey or in Greece. In the first case of course the Cypriot reaction is expected to be strong as the route of the pipeline passes through the Cypriot EEZ which will significantly affect the financial interests of Cyprus⁶⁴. Of utmost importance is the proposal to create the submarine cable (through sub-marine DC cables and HVDC onshore stations in each country/location, and will have a capacity of 2000 MW) linking Israel, Cyprus and Greece electric system which will approach the coast of Crete and then channeled to the increased needs of the European market. The latter is so important for European Union's energy policy as it would operate as an energy bridge between the two continents⁶⁵. As it's clear from the above figures, it is obvious that Turkey will not limit itself to exclusion from the energy map of the Eastern Mediterranean, taking the role of the server or client power but will pursue larger pieces from the pie of the energy reserves. In response to the potential energy exclusion, is the issue of NAVTEX from Turkey which committed part of Cyprus EEZ (a practice that is contrary to International Law of the Sea) for seismographic surveys by the Turkish research vessel "Barbaros" accompanied by two auxiliary ships and a frigate navy⁶⁶. The last, is part of the aggressive Turkish foreign policy which aims to demonstrate power in order to strengthen both its role and their interests in the region.

Taking all these things into account, the whole process of exploitation of hydrocarbons will build on the basis of solving the Cyprus problem in accordance

⁶² "TURKEY AS A REGIONAL NATURAL GAS HUB: MYTH OR REALITY?", Simone Tagliapietra, Winter 2014, Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei

⁶³ "The advent of FCNG now presents the possibility of a Phased-Development For East Med's Hydrocarbons", Christis Enotiades

⁶⁴ "Natural Gas Export Options for Israel and Cyprus". Mediterranean Paper Series.. Simon Henderson, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, September 2013

⁶⁵ Official site of EuroAsia interconnector.

⁶⁶ "A NEW EQUILIBRIUM:THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, ISRAEL, ANDTURKEY IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGIC ARCHITECTURE", Michael Tanchum, Occasional Paper Series 1, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Foundation) and Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), 2015

with the UN Security Council resolutions. Already, the great powers, international organizations, Cyprus and Turkey are in permanent contact to resolve the Cyprus issue as there is a strong interest of all sides to find a comprehensive settlement which will be gripped and the energy issue which affects the island. On this subject, the TRNC through the moderate leader Mustafa Akinci will have to face the European Union itself, which recognizes the sovereign rights of its Member States, including the extraction and exploitation right. For Turkey, its position in the Eastern Mediterranean it's too important as it has been trying to develop a range in the region and Cyprus plays an important role in that Turkish effort as in the northern part of the island Turkey has a number of troops. The resolution of the Cyprus issue would give Turkey not only a leading role in the new geostrategic and energy map of the Eastern Mediterranean, and paves the way for the normalization of Ankara's relations with the regional countries but also would accelerate the negotiations for accession to the EU. Although, this was difficult in the summer of 2016 due to the domestic developments in Turkey and the failed coup d'état against the Erdogan's government. It's a fact that the climate between the two political leaderships has become better after the election in spring 2015 of Mustafa Akinci and there are big hopes for a resolution in the upcoming months. Into this framework the Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades suggested the return of Famagusta to Greek-Cypriots and a direct trade between TRNC and the rest of the world as an exchange⁶⁷. Turkey observes the situation and the developments in Eastern Mediterranean with suspicion and it's aiming to maintain and reassure its strong role in the region. Cyprus will continue be in the scope of Turkey for two reasons. Firstly, in order to protect the Turkish Cypriots and secondly for its geostrategic importance. The role of being a transit country it's not vital only for them but also for Europe as the latter desire to avoid the dependence on Russian gas and the good bilateral relationships with Turkey is crucial. It remains to be seen in the chessboard of the Cyprus issue in the future, if Turkey continues to conduct exploration operations into the EEZ of Cyprus. This would be the biggest obstacle in the peace, mining and settlement process of the Cyprus issue⁶⁸.

Greek-Turkish relations

Greek-Turkish relations have gone through several variations, but never have normalized. The state of these relationships reveals an almost permanent confrontation, mistrust and hostility. Since the Treaty of Lausanne (July 1923) and onwards are many developments and phases that have passed the relations between the two neighboring countries. At the heart of Greek-Turkish relations were Cyprus

⁶⁷ "Energy Resources in the Eastern Mediterranean: Source for Cooperation or Fuel for Tension", Michael Leigh and Charlotte Brandsma, POLICY BRIEF, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), March 19, 2012

⁶⁸ "Νέα Ευκαιρία για την Επίλυση του Κυπριακού Προβλήματος; Η Επικαιρότητα της Αντιπαράθεσης γύρω από τον Ρόλο της Τουρκίας στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο", Νίκος Στέλιος, ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ (ΕΛΙΑΜΕΠ), Κείμενο Εργασίας Νο 65/2015

and from 1974 onwards the normalization passes necessarily through the solution of the Cyprus issue.

The issues which are on the agenda are numerous and quite as few of them have been solved. In the early 1970's Turkey launched a systematic policy of disputes and claims against the sovereignty and sovereign rights of Greece as the questioning over the extent of Greek national airspace, the Greek sovereignty over islands and the jurisdiction of Greece within the area of responsibility for search and rescue issues, challenging responsibilities within the Athens FIR exerted by Greece under ICAO decision, and the continued refusal of Turkey to comply with the traffic rules, minority issues on the part of Turkey in the region of Thrace, negotiations on Turkey's entry as a member of the EU after the European Council of Helsinki in 1999 (Turkey is officially a candidate member), Turkey's demand for demilitarization of the islands of the Eastern Aegean, the disputed maritime borders related to the EEZ and the legal and sovereign rights of Greece, with the threat of war (*casus belli*), to extend its territorial waters of up to 12 nautical miles, as required by Law of the Sea as it has almost all the coastal States of the international community, including Turkey (in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean) are some of the hottest issues on the agenda of the Greek-Turkish relations⁶⁹. Nowadays, they have added in the agenda the agreement between EU and Turkey over the migration flows from Syria which directly affects the situation in Greece. Particularly the last two elements are coming in the timeliness quite often as the Turkish side is looking forward to a more active role in the whole process of finding and exploitation of the gas deposits in the region of the Eastern Mediterranean. According to the Turkish positions, the threat of the extension of Greek territorial waters beyond 6nm, the militarization of the islands of the Eastern Aegean, the delimitation of the Greek EEZ and the national airspace of 10nm exceeding these territorial waters are issues that can be integrated into the real causes of the Greek-Turkish conflict.⁷⁰

So far, Greece has not designated EEZ with any neighboring country (except of Italy and Albania-which they don't have validated so far), although it has the right to do so in accordance with the UN International Maritime Law and International law of 1982⁷¹. Doing so in the Aegean Sea is -in statement of Turkish-occasion war, but the Greek side has not made any such claim⁷². This hesitancy from Greece, for an EEZ agreement, gives the chance to Turkey to challenge the already EEZ agreements. The self-proclaimed of EEZ delimitation has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, geostrategically the Greek EEZ has great importance both for Greece and for the EU since they provide the ability to control a large part of the sea by extending

⁶⁹ "Issues of Greek - Turkish Relations", Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁷⁰ Background Note on Aegean Disputes, Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁷¹ "Ωκεανοί : Η Πηγή της Ζωής Σύμβαση των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για το Δίκαιο της Θάλασσας, 20ή Επέτειος (1982-2002)", Περιφερειακό Κέντρο Πληροφόρησης του ΟΗΕ (UNRIC)

https://www.unric.org/el/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=26267&Itemid=31

⁷² "Maritime Delimitation & Offshore Activities (Presentation)", Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

its field of action. The status of the EEZ enables to remote islands becomes largely regulators. In this context an important role are playing islands like Kastelorizo(or Megisti) and Gavdos⁷³. Also, by setting the EEZ the energy resources they are guaranteed, the maritime routes will be regulated while the sea borders will be clarified. The potential of EEZ delimitation for Greece is readily understood that should be done within the frames of the Law of the Sea and the new rules governing the regulation of relations between the countries in the wider marine and oceanic area. On the other hand, the shortcomings of the Greek foreign policy have enabled Turkey to proceed with the question of sovereignty. The non-demarcation of the EEZ leaves exposed Greece to the Turkish objections (the "gray zones" in the Aegean, the continuing violations of air and sea space, the investigative efforts in shelf of Kastelorizo EEZ and the Cyprus problem) and the case of "casus belli" it's the most typical example.

A recent example was the challenge of the Cypriot EEZ from the Turkish side. More specific, in March of 2016, Turkey raised a comprehensive and ex novo delimitation of the EEZ by Greece and Cyprus. The letter, which came in response to the Cypriot Permanent Representative in UN, N. Emiliou, and Turkey essentially, rejects the EEZ delimitation agreement between Cyprus and Egypt⁷⁴. In this context, Turkey is challenging and the ongoing explorations in the Cypriot EEZ, stressing that they land on the Turkish continental shelf. Turkey with that way is claiming the biggest part of the EEZ of the eastern Mediterranean, as they have one of the biggest mainland coastlines in the region. Indeed, it is stressed that the Turkish continental shelf is following the midline of Turkey and Egypt and it's added to the area south and east of Rhodes and Castellorizo (Megisti)⁷⁵. The small island of Castellorizo is raising numerous discussions between the two states as they affect with their own position in the map of the Eastern Mediterranean the maritime boundaries of these two states. Already, the former Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Turkey Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu have questioned several times the status-quo of Castellorizo. It's characteristic that he has classified it, undeniably, as a Greek island which does not belong to the Aegean Sea but to the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition, for the delimitation of the maritime zones in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean Mr. Davutoglu stated that "they are two different cases geographically. The Eastern Mediterranean doesn't have many islands; the Castellorizo Island is the only one which raises numerous questions"⁷⁶. Into this framework and having heavily hit by

⁷³ "Exclusive Economic Zone: From the strategic motion to economic solution"
Vasilis Kikilias, May 2012 ,Kastaniotis Publications

⁷⁴ General Assembly documents related to oceans and the law of the sea
and issued under that agenda item

http://www.un.org/depts/los/general_assembly/other_general_assembly_documents.htm

⁷⁵ "Turkey threatens Cyprus' EEZ anew in UN letter",12/05/2016,
<http://www.sigmalive.com/en/news/politics/144852/turkey-threatens-cyprus-eez-anew-in-un-letter>

⁷⁶ "Νταβούτογλου: Το Καστελόριζο δεν είναι Αιγαίο", 08/03/2011,
<http://www.tovima.gr/politics/article/?aid=388432> όπως επίσης «Νταβούτογλου: Η Τουρκία δε θα

the worst debt crisis in their modern history, Greece keeps a low profile for every issue that may aggravate the confrontation with its eastern neighbors. These elements are showing the doctrine of Turkish foreign policy in the aftermath of the developments in Eastern Mediterranean as believes that it is excluded from a process that takes place in a region where the eastern Mediterranean Sea is bordering with its shores and should therefore make it a participant in the process. In that case the Cyprus issue is also playing a vital role as a misty and fluid landscape remains in any development as Cyprus and Greece seek resolution of the Cyprus problem based on the UN Security Council resolutions⁷⁷.

On the issue of the continental shelf, Turkey considers that the fundamental criterion for the delimitation of shelf is the natural-geological affinity of ground dry with the ground bottom, the islands are special cases and the Aegean Sea is a semi-enclosed sea which requires the implementation of special and exceptional rules⁷⁸. More specific, Turkey argues that Greece has no right to extend its maritime borders unilaterally as they must first reach an agreement with Turkey, which is a coastal state of a semi-enclosed sea. With this tactic of non-recognition not only the Greek EEZ but the EEZ of regional countries, Turkey is trying to make both the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean disputed regions by blocking by all means the exploitation and extraction process until its requirements being satisfied.

On the other hand, Turkey does not see with good eyes the tripartite agreements that have been developed in the region between Greece-Cyprus-Israel and Greece-Cyprus-Egypt. There is no doubt that these alliances emerged under the new conditions and needs to address the aggressive Turkish foreign policy. In 2010, Greece, took advantage of the very bad relations between Israel and Turkey, after the Mavi Marmara incident, and rushed to open a new dialogue both in the bilateral relations and in the creation of a common stance on energy issues with Israel. The change of the Greek stance in their relationship with Israel came in an era in which Greece for so many years had good relationship with the pro-Arab regimes of the region like Egypt and Palestinian Authority⁷⁹. Additionally, Turkey's reactions over the alliance between Greece-Cyprus and Egypt were immediate as well the Turkish Foreign Minister Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu stated that an agreement for the exploration of natural

δεχθεί συμφωνία Ελλάδας-Αιγύπτου για ΑΟΖ», Αθανασόπουλος Άγγελος, 08/12/2014, <http://www.tovima.gr/politics/article/?aid=657414>

⁷⁷ The first UN Security Council resolution on the Turkish invasion (no 353),1974, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/353%281974%29 see also United Nations General Assembly resolution 3212 (1974) titled "Question of Cyprus", later endorsed by the UN Security Council resolution 365 (1974), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/3212%28XXIX%29 http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/365%281974%29

⁷⁸ "Αλφαβητάρι των Ελληνο-Τουρκικών σχέσεων", Δρ. Θάνος Ντόκος, Κείμενο Εργασίας Νο 11/2010, ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ (ΕΛΙΑΜΕΠ)

⁷⁹ "The Emergence of Israeli-Greek Cooperation", Aristotle Tziampiris, Springer International Publishing, 2015, p. 48

gas off the coasts of Cyprus will be invalid⁸⁰. Moreover, the desire of the three sides (mainly from Greece) for the delimitation of the EEZ between them will be opposed vehemently from Turkey if the latter considered that the agreement it's against of its interests. Another important element is the recognition of the EEZ of Cyprus by the EU, a fact that would make stronger the position of Greece if they went to such a move as an EU member. With these moves in the spotlight, Turkey, is aware that due to the exploitation of mineral deposits and their possible utilization both the geostrategic role, the power and the status quo of Cyprus and Greece will be upgraded in the international system by making the balance of power in the region volatile.

The Turkish stance and the movements on the chessboard of the Eastern Mediterranean show Turkey's strong desire not only become part of the game but also to become the leading power in the region preventing the creation of a counterbalance. Turkey didn't see with good eyes the alliances that formed in the region during the period of their isolation. So after months of consultation and external interventions progressed to full restoration of bilateral relations with Israel (a country of big interest for Turkey) while there are constant discussions to find a definitive and viable solution to the Cyprus issue⁸¹. Peculiar form is also the Turkey-Egypt relations which tested after the rise to power of Sisi's government and the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood and the government of Mohamed Morsi. Turkey hasn't so far recognized the Government Sisi while on the other side there is a decision, which has not yet been executed, for the execution of former President Morsi and the other members of the Muslim Brotherhood from the Sisi regime. Ankara's decision to normalize relations comes at a time when the Turkish foreign policy is facing significant problems in various fields. The restoration of bilateral relations may become gradually and over time⁸². The need for reconfiguration of Turkish foreign policy along the new regional realities appears to be a common ground.

Regardless of the final form and quality of the double tripartite relations in the Southeast Mediterranean, those countries they cannot in any way ignore long Turkey. Turkey will remain the most important variable in the Southeast Mediterranean and the Middle East. It's the largest and strongest country in the area from which they generated the current problems. Despite the profound internal contradictions and conflicts, the outward power will remain for a long time still intact. Taking all these things into account and having knowledge of the internal and international situation which is very fragile and mainly around the Turkish borders, any objection which

⁸⁰ "Energy Cooperation and Security in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Seismic Shift towards Peace or Conflict?", Angelos Giannakopoulos, Research Paper, The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, February 2016

⁸¹ Andreas Stergiou (2016): Turkey-Cyprus-Israel relations and the Cyprus conflict, Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies

⁸²OMAR SHEIRA, "TURKEY-EGYPT RELATIONS: INCENTIVES TO NORMALIZE", September 2014, Policy Brief, Global Political Trends Center Istanbul Kültür University

"Between the Syrian Stalemate and the Egyptian Coup: In Search of a "Reset" for Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East", Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, January 2014, Working Paper No 38/2014, HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN AND FOREIGN POLICY (ELIAMEP)

may be raised by Turkey particularly over the discussions for the resolution of the Cyprus issue and in Eastern Mediterranean puzzle should be considered and answered carefully. It is not improbable that the complaints in the future could become more demanding. Within this environment, Greece should respond through the rules of international law and international regulations as they are explicitly captured.

EPILOGUE

For Turkey, the exploitation of its geopolitical position and diversification of sources of energy supply are two big targets in order to be able on the one hand to meet their needs and on the other to realize its ambition of becoming an energy hub for East and West. The government of Recep Tayipp Erdogan is well aware that their advantage in the energy sector will strengthen its international profile and make it a major regional power that could participate in decisions that affect the fragile geopolitical balance in the Middle East and Central Asia. However, the energy strategy of Ankara appears particularly vulnerable against energy alliances that formed the previous years between Israel, Cyprus, Greece and Egypt in the southeastern Mediterranean. Those alliances formed at a time when Turkish-Israeli relations weakened after 2010 (now are moving towards normalization) and policy of "zero problems" with their neighbors didn't bring the desired results. Turkey has made great strides in the energy sector. Ankara is knowing the delicate balance of the area and is trying to reduce its dependence on imports of Iranian, Iraqi and Russian oil and for this the state company Turkish Petroleum (TPAO) collaborates with multinationals Shell and Exxon Mobil. Turkey wants to appear as an energy hub among European consumers in the West and to oil and gas suppliers in the East in order to obtain maximum benefits from the diversification of energy sources. Turkey due to its geopolitical position already has a large pipeline network (Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi, Kirkouk- Ceyhan, Greece-Turkey) and moves to expand with new energy transport routes. Within this framework, Ankara has signed agreement with Azerbaijan to build the Trans-Anatolian (TANAP) to carry Caspian gas not only to Turkish territory but also to European market through the construction of the Trans-Anatolian (TAP). Also, important for the Turkish energy interests is the gas pipeline Tabriz - Ankara which is connecting Iran with Turkey and gives the opportunity to benefit from the export of energy resources from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to European markets. Iran considers Turkey as an important energy partner in its efforts to have allies and play a decisive role not only in energy issues but also in the region so as not to drive in international isolation because of the conflict with the US and Israel over its nuclear program and their interference in the Syrian civil war. Alongside Turkey seek and LNG markets (LNG) to diversify its sources of supply and to meet its needs. The Ankara government recently purchased LNG from Algeria and Nigeria by concluding long-term agreements.

But Turkey's plan to become an energy hub between East and West threatened heavily by the Israeli - Cypriot energy alliance in the southeastern Mediterranean. Into this context the participation of Greece will make it even more difficult the Turkey's position as it will tap into the Aegean sea. Furthermore, the Cyprus issue complicates even more the situation for Ankara which signed an agreement for research with the TRNC in response to research that revealed the huge gas reserves in the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The expansionary policy of Ankara makes particularly evident the ambition to become a full regional power in the Middle East.

Ankara is now facing problems with all its neighbors, with the wealth-producing countries Iran, Iraq, Israel, Greece and Cyprus. At the same time, the military coup attempt, the three-month state of emergency declared by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the fierce internal polarization, but mainly fears that Turkey is entering a long period of turmoil, not even ruled out the risk of civil war, are the new data in the light of which will roll both the bilateral relations and the energy projects. The involved "players" in the energy sector recognize the dangers of the new period and reconfigure their plans. Absolutely typical is for example the resurgence of Russian interest in the Burgas – Alexandroupolis after the collapse of the construction of Blue Stream pipeline that would connect Turkey and Russia. With these moves Turkey is aware that due to the exploitation of mineral deposits and their possible utilization both the geostrategic role ,the power and the status quo of Greece will be upgraded in the international system by making the balance of power in the region volatile.

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